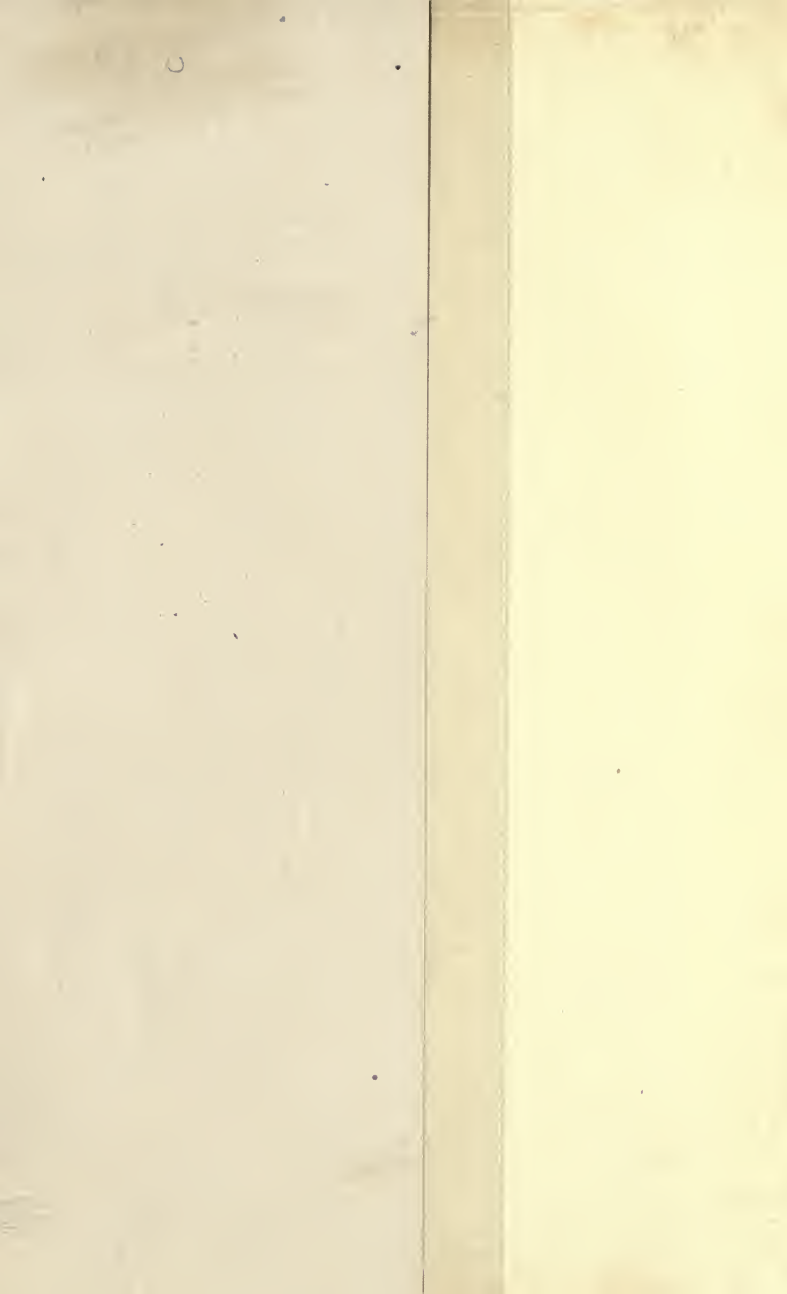




# Marooned in Crater Lake

By  
*Alfred Powers*

Stories, with Original  
Situations and Ingen-  
ious Plots, of the Sky-  
line Trail, the Ump-  
qua Trail, and the  
Old Oregon Trail



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## MAROONED IN CRATER LAKE



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STORIES OF THE SKYLINE TRAIL,  
THE UMPQUA TRAIL, AND THE  
OLD OREGON TRAIL

By ALFRED POWERS



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PORTLAND, OREGON

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TO  
JOHN AND ELIZABETH POWERS,  
TWO LITTLE OREGONIANS





## *The Three Trails*

**M**OST ROADS, reflecting the sluggish energies of man, go quickly down again from heights they are forced to climb. The Skyline Trail, by choice, follows the backbone of a great mountain range, detouring only the peaks, and those reluctantly. Its narrow track, dug out by foresters southward from Mount Hood clear along the top of the Cascades, is one of the loftiest in the world.

The Umpqua Trail also went southward. It is part of the Pacific Highway now. Mountains were piled athwart it, but much of it passed through easy lowlands that betrayed men to danger in the days of the gold of Jacksonville and the gold of California.

This year, the Oregon Trail is a century old. Its once weary length is obliterated by a smooth and far-stretching pavement, but the historical importance of its heroic and mighty traffic is being commemorated by a Nation. Dreamers of the Old World sought the Straits of Anian. These Straits turned out to be, for the doers of the New World, only this harsh overland route.

By these thoroughfares a cycle is denoted—toil and gold, and relief from both on the heights of mountains. The Old Oregon Trail brought men to homes; the Umpqua Trail took them to wealth; the Skyline Trail lifts them once more to freedom and inspiration.

Along these three trails the stories and adventures of this book have their setting.

Marooned in Crater Lake, The Dinner Call and The Vanished Riders originally appeared in *St. Nicholas*, New York; The Hickory Bank, in *The Youth's Companion*, Boston; The Fourth of the Far Fifteen, in *The Improvement Era*, Salt Lake. The Blue Bucket Mine is published here for the first time. Through the kindness of the editors of *The Improvement Era*, The Earth's Curvature, by J. W. Booth, is included as a supplementary article to The Fourth of the Far Fifteen.

*Portland, Oregon,*

*May 15, 1930.*

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# *Marooned in Crater Lake*

**“I**T does not seem so sublime at first, but the mote is in your own eye. It is great, great; but it takes you days to see how great. It lies 2,000 feet under your feet, and as it reflects walls so perfectly that you cannot tell the wall from the reflection in the intensely blue water, you have a continuous unbroken circular wall of 24 miles to contemplate at a glance, all of which lies 2,000 feet, and seems to lie 4,000 feet, below. Yet so bright, so intensely blue is the lake, that it seems at times, from some points of view, to lift right in your face.”

—JOAQUIN MILLER.



## *Marooned in Crater Lake*



IN OCTOBER, 1910, before George Washington's profile had displaced the picture of Benjamin Franklin on the one-cent stamps, Jim Turner bought a book of this denomination at Medford, Oregon, securing only twenty-four of the green rectangles for twenty-five cents. But the protective book was well worth a penny when carrying stamps in a warm pocket. He tore out five of them as postage for five scenic postcards which he mailed, three for his aunt and two for Mrs. Harry

Smith. Mailing postcards was one of his duties as the only boy member of the two-car tourist party which included his uncle and aunt and Mr. and Mrs. Smith. He put the book with its nineteen remaining stamps in a hip pocket of his khaki trousers and promptly forgot all about it until two days later, at the edge of the blue waters of Crater Lake, when he had occasion to use it under circumstances that made those nineteen one-cent stamps of greater value to him than nineteen dollars or even nineteen hundred dollars.

When the man on mule back, who accidentally discovered Crater Lake, cast the first white man's gaze down the precipitous and far descending walls of that deep basin, it was his belief that the unruffled blue water, a thousand feet below, would forever remain inviolate to human touch—it would never slake thirst, or wash dirt from hand or face, or be navigated.

Yet Jim Turner, on that October day in



1910, had done all that the discoverer, seeing no possibility of man's descent down those sheer precipices, thought never would be done. Lying prone, with no cup but the lake itself, he had taken a drink of the cold, satisfying water. He had dipped up in his hat some of it with which to loosen the jelly that clung to his fingers from the sandwiches of his lunch. Finally, that morning at eleven o'clock, he had come in a rowboat to the tiny beach upon which he still stood, dismayed by a universal solitude, menaced by approaching night—deserted, alone!

At six o'clock that October evening he still remained there, the only soul anywhere about the edges of the lake, the unattainable rim itself virtually left unpeopled. The winds that rocked the firs far up on that rim, descended to him with abated strength. But the cold crept down, piercing and numbing, so that he had to pace his cramped beach for warmth.

Gathering dusk had already changed the indigo water to black and was blurring the silhouette of Wizard Island out in the lake. The stars brightened and increased. He imagined they were visible to him earlier than to others, as he looked up from the darkening depths of that vast hole in which he stood. Those stars promised that the first snows, due at this season of the year, mercifully would not come that night.

Weather and chance could do with him as they pleased. He could not help himself. He could not attract the help of others. He was marooner in Crater Lake!

All around, in a grim circle, rose the almost perpendicular walls, from eight hundred to two thousand feet high. In front of him extended the silent and now forsaken waters of the lake, two thousand feet deep. It was impossible to scale the one. It was equally impossible to swim the other.

As he paced up and down on the narrow

strip of beach, with darkness closing in around him, Jim had opportunity to review the events that had made him a captive in that majestic prison.

With his uncle and aunt and the Smiths, he had reached Crater Lake on the last day of the season. The Lodge was already closed to guests, and a single caretaker of the property had been left to prepare everything against the approach of winter. Late in the season as it was, a half-dozen automobile parties had come up to look at the lake, for the bad weather, though expected at any time, had not yet set in. The man in charge offered to give this late-season group boat service on the lake until four o'clock in the afternoon. But he explained that this was the last time he would go down the trail and that, before returning to the Lodge, he would haul out the boats for winter.

But it was not this circumstance alone that had brought about Jim's plight.

On the long motor trip, he had been in the habit of riding sometimes in his uncle's car and sometimes in that of the Smiths. After the trip to Crater Lake the two cars expected to separate. His aunt and uncle intended to go back to Portland by way of Medford and the Pacific Highway, while the Smiths meant to tour the country a week longer, returning to Portland by way of Klamath Falls and Eastern Oregon. Jim was free to go with either, but had not yet made up his mind.

He was still postponing his decision when, at the edge of the lake, Mr. and Mrs. Smith took passage in one crowded motor-boat, his uncle and aunt in another, while he selected a rowboat with two cordial strangers, inclined, like himself, to fish for the famous trout of Crater Lake.

He was having some luck with the fish and was by no means ready to go, when his aunt and uncle hailed him from a motor-boat that drew up to take him aboard.

"Are you going with us or the Smiths?" they asked. "We are starting right away and expect to get to Medford tonight. The Smiths won't be leaving for a couple of hours. We have already told them our plans. They said to be at their car at four o'clock, if you are going with them. If you are not on hand at that time, they will know you have gone with us."

Jim was reluctant to give up his fishing, and this reluctance prompted his decision.

"I'll go with the Smiths," he said. "Take these three fish for your supper at Medford. Good-by. I'll see you next week in Portland."

"Good-by," returned his aunt and uncle. "Be sure to be at the Smiths' car not later than four o'clock. We won't see them again."

At a small recession in the universal wall, on a tiny shelf or beach, where the water was deep and where the fishing seemed even more promising than from the boat, Jim asked to be put ashore. He told the men in the row-

boat that he would catch one of the launches as it came by and that they did not need to wait for him or bother to call for him later.

Glad of the chance for two hours more of fishing, he expected to catch the motor-boat in which the Smiths were touring the lake. But this boat failed, after a long interval, to appear. He remembered now that it had come this way when it started out. He saw it, far on the other side of the lake, going in the direction of the landing and the foot of the trail. He shouted, but they did not hear him. He waved his hands and his handkerchief, but they did not see him. The boat disappeared from sight!

He expected that another boat of some sort would be along, but as he scanned the surface of the lake he saw none. None put out from behind Wizard Island. He looked at his watch. It was a quarter of four. He remembered what the caretaker of the Lodge had said—at four he would begin hauling out the



boats for winter. Even now he was probably covering them with tarpaulin. No more oars would dip in the blue waters before the next summer. The deep silence would be unbroken by the chug-chug of a motor. Navigation had ceased upon the lake, which was being left to its long winter solitude.

He was stranded!

He began to shout at the top of his voice, but he was more than two miles from the boat landing, and the near-by walls caught and returned his calls in echoes. He kept shouting until he was hoarse and his throat was sore. It did no good. Nobody heard him, nor was it possible for him to be heard.

The chance was no better that anybody would see him. The wall back of him went straight up for a hundred feet. From that point it slanted backward toward the rim. He had noticed this topography when he had approached it by boat in the morning. If the whole face of the wall had been perpendicu-

lar, there would have been more hope of attracting the attention of a possible observer from above. But the sloping upper part and the sheer drop at the bottom, put him in a concealed position. He could no more be seen than some one leaning close against the side of a house could be seen by a person sitting on the ridge of the roof. He was completely out of the line of sight.

Nobody knew that he was shut up in that great caldron. His aunt and uncle thought he was with the Smiths. The Smiths thought he was with his aunt and uncle. It would be a week before they would see each other in Portland and find out that he was missing.

The caretaker of the Lodge would not be coming back down to the lake. He had made his final visit. He would be working back at the Lodge. There was no way to attract his attention.

Could he survive until his uncle found out what had happened, or was he doomed to a



grave in the lake he had so long looked forward to seeing? He had two jelly sandwiches and two raw fish. He would not starve, but if winter set in, scantily clad as he was, he could not live through the cold of seven autumn nights. His imagination took a tragic direction. Maybe his aunt and uncle would never find him. The next summer, boats would pass by the little beach where he stood. The deep snows in the meantime would have come and gone. The people in the boats would be startled by what they saw there. The world would know that a boy had been left to perish in that great abyss of the Cascades, giving fresh fears to the Indians, who refuse to look upon its enchanted waters.

He recalled the Indian legends of the lake and of its sinister toll of savage life. He had read them idly in a folder. They now assumed an oppressive meaning. For an hour or more he was entirely miserable.

Then his thoughts began to take a more

practical turn. If he could get over to Wizard Island diagonally in front of him, he might signal successfully from its top. But three quarters of a mile or so of deep water intervened between him and it. He couldn't swim it clothed; he doubted whether he could swim it at all. If he stripped and succeeded in getting across, there was no telling how long he would have to remain, exposed to the October chill of mountain nights, before attracting help. He would surely freeze.

Around the edge of the lake from where he stood, it was more than two miles to the boat landing and the beginning of the trail. There would be a few short stretches of beach along which he could walk, or shallow water which he could wade; but, for the most part, there would be deep water bordered by perpendicular walls offering no supporting hold for a cold and exhausted swimmer. Again, he would have to leave his clothes behind. The frigid October night that kept him walking

his little beach for warmth, reminded him that such a course would be suicide.

It would be better, he decided, to wait till his uncle began a search, rather than try to gain Wizard Island or the trail, with almost certain failure ahead in either attempt.

His mind worked round to the idea of a signal. He took an inventory of his possessions in the dark. He had two raw fish, as has been said, and two jelly sandwiches, wrapped thickly in newspaper. He had his watch, his jack-knife, one hundred feet of heavy three-ply trolling line, with fifteen feet of leader, fifty feet of smaller fishing line, with a short leader, and an alder pole that he had cut while coming down the trail that morning. For the purpose of getting a signal up to the rim, there seemed no value in all this. He included his clothes in the inventory. Although he had done so several times before, he felt again for matches, but found none. All he found in his pockets, in addition to his hand-

kerchief, knife, purse, and watch, was what he remembered was a little book of one-cent stamps, which seemed worthless enough at that place and time. In his impatience at finding this stamp-book instead of matches, he had an impulse to send it sailing out into the lake. But he put it back in his pocket.

Upon reflection, he was less disappointed about the matches. He had nothing to burn except a small pine board which he had found upon his little beach, the newspaper in which his sandwiches were wrapped, the stamps, and possibly his green alder fishing rod, if it were whittled into fine enough shavings. Such scant fuel would not produce a flame that would be discernible over the thousand-foot precipice that shut him in, nor produce a volume of smoke that would rise to such a height before dissolving into the air. With a match, however, and this meager supply of wood, he might have been able to cook one of his fish.

He realized he couldn't give a signal, for he had nothing to give it with—nothing that could remotely be worked into a signaling device of any kind. He would simply have to wait a week until his uncle began a search, and trust that meanwhile the Cascade storms would hold off.

His teeth chattered with the cold. The prospect of spending seven such nights as this was dismal enough.

His mind tired out with thoughts that got him nowhere, and his legs weary from pacing his small refuge, he sat down with his back against the wall, put his coat over his head, and attempted to get some sleep. He dozed fitfully. Frequently he would have to get up to exercise his cramped and chilled legs and to thaw out his congealed blood.

In the morning he ate one of his two jelly sandwiches. He would eat the second one the next day; after that, the raw fish.

He had no more idea of how he was going



to get out of Crater Lake than he had had the night before. But he was more reconciled to his plight, and his mind, freed from panic, was clearer.

While rummaging in his pockets, he idly took out the book of one-cent stamps and turned through the green rectangles of the pictured Ben Franklin. He wet his finger and tested the gummed lower surfaces. This time he had no impulse to throw them into the lake. He wouldn't have traded the little stamp-book for ten thousand matches. He put it carefully back into his pocket as though it were a great treasure.

He had hit upon a possible way of giving a signal. He meant to work out his plan with great care, taking all the time necessary. The man undoubtedly was still at the Lodge. He could scarcely have finished his work so soon. If this man's attention could be attracted, Jim felt there was a good chance that he would be rescued. But the only way was to get a signal

above that thousand-foot wall that hemmed him in. It wasn't likely that the caretaker of the Lodge, who was an old-timer in the region, would give any particular scrutiny to Crater Lake scenery. He might not find it convenient to walk down to the edge of the rim to look out over the magic blue waters of the lake. At best, he would be a passive observer. An occasional and indifferent glance across the lake, as he straightened up from his labors, was as much as could be expected from him. To catch and hold the man's eyes during one of their casual and roving inspections of the landscape—that was what Jim meant to do.

Gradually, he was figuring it all out. He was certain he could do it if the wind would blow—blow only hard enough to ruffle the smooth water shut in by those protecting walls. The afternoon before, he had seen it shake the firs on the rim, like prune-trees under the hands of the harvesters, and had felt

it descend a thousand feet to where he stood, not wholly becalmed. A breeze, a breeze—that, above all else, he wanted. That necessity alone was now absent from his inventory, which he took once more, this time with definite purpose.

Laying aside his remaining sandwich for the next morning's consumption, he smoothed out the newspaper that had wrapped it and its fellows. In one place a jelly stain had soaked through, moistening and weakening the fabric beyond all use, but this was in such a position that an unharmed area of paper two feet square could be secured. He placed the paper on a dry rock. He picked up the pine board, whittled off some shavings to test its soundness, and placed it beside the paper. To the collection on the rock he added his hundred feet of trolling line, his smaller fishing-line of fifty feet, and the leader from both lines. On top of all he placed the little book of stamps as the crowning jewel of his



possessions. If any one had been there to see, he would have wondered what purpose this miscellany was meant to serve.

The first thing Jim did was to untwist the three strands of his trolling line, securing three hundred feet of cord instead of one hundred. In the same way, he got one hundred feet from his fifty feet of small line. The untwisting of the kinky and cork-screwing strands completed, he surveyed the resulting four hundred feet of stout cord, but regarded it as only a good beginning toward his complete needs.

He pulled off his high-topped boots, removed his long woolen socks, put his boots back on bare feet, and began unraveling the socks. These yielded two big balls of thread. But as he tested the strength of the yarn he was not satisfied. Reversing the process of the fishing lines, he twisted the two strands tightly together until the two balls of yarn formed a double cord. This had cut the

length in half, which wasn't enough for his purpose. He drafted still another garment—he took off his sweater and reduced it likewise to twine, which he doubled and twisted as in the case of the yarn from the socks. At last he had, all told, slightly more than two thousand feet of string. This cordage manufacture, however, had consumed the whole day. Darkness came and forbade further labor.

Once more, sleep was difficult, in spite of the fact that it was greatly in arrears. He suffered from the cold more than he had the night before, for he was now deprived of his socks and sweater. The hours seemed interminably long, but he obtained a few brief periods of repose.

In the morning, while it was still dark, he ate his last sandwich; and, as soon as it was light enough, he took his knife and whittled from the pine board three straight thin strips. Two of these splits were about twenty-three

inches long. The third was about fifteen inches long. The two longer ones he crossed in the form of an "X," but with the intersection three or four inches from the center toward the upper ends. The third and shorter he placed horizontally across the other two, its center at their intersection. He lashed the joint with cord. Around the outside, in grooves previously cut in the six ends of the three sticks, he stretched the leader of his trolling line, so that he had a strong and rigid six-sided framework.

With his knife, he cut from the newspaper a covering of the same shape as the framework, but with an inch margin all round.

On a smooth, dry place on his little beach he laid down the paper, and, over this, the framework of sticks and catgut. He then took out of his pocket the book of stamps. With his knife he slit each of the nineteen stamps into four pieces, making in all seventy-six gummed seals, quite narrow, but long enough

in each case to have much adhesive tenacity. With these stickers he fastened down the border of paper, which he folded over the catgut rim.

Crossing and adjusting three strings with great care and exactness, he fashioned a "bridle," and arranged a short pendant loop at the lower end.

To the crossed strings, or bridle, he tied one end of his two thousand feet of twine. He tore his handkerchief into strips, which he pieced into a string and which he tied in the center of the pendant loop. Then from his shirt, he slashed off a section of additional cloth and tied it to the lower end of the handkerchief string.

The signal was ready to carry upward its message of an imprisoned boy. Jim had built a kite!

A breeze to fly it was the next need. He held it up in front of him, but the pressure against it was hardly noticeable. Something

of the calm of morning still prevailed. He looked across and up at his barometers on the rim—the trees—and saw by their comparative quiet that the wind had not yet come in from the mountain-tops. He would be patient until the afternoon.

At two o'clock, from a perch as high up as he could gain, he held the precious kite above his head. If it ever dropped into the water, all his labor would be lost. He held the kite up and threw it from him, but it dropped down, not to the water, for he gave it but little line, and, besides, he held the tail in his hand. It seemed a lifeless thing.

Many times he tried. Always it dropped. It seemed without buoyancy. It was heavy and spiritless, without the grace and lightness of flight. His heart sank. It would not fly!

He adjusted and readjusted the bridle. He subtracted from and added to the tail. Still it fell like a shot bird. For an hour he tried.

In the meantime, the wind increased. The

firs on the rim no longer stood still, but bowed and courtesied. Out from shore the surface of the water had lost some of its glassy smoothness. The reflection of the wall in front of him trembled slightly. The sweat that came out on his face from his anxiety and his labors, was evaporated quickly.

He kept trying, and at last began to have periodical promises of success. Finally, a breath of wind bellied the kite and tautened the paper against the sticks back of it. He threw it out several feet. A timely breeze that he felt against his cheek caught it. It shot out straight, and even rose a little. He dropped the tail and gradually let out line. The kite darted from side to side, and once it made a quick dart downward like an airplane on a tail-dive—it was a dangerous moment. But it rallied like an airplane, though the tail dripped a few drops of water as it rose. Steadied by that tail, it climbed diagonally upward above the blue of the lake slowly toward the



blue of the sky. It began to pull so strongly that Jim had a new alarm. But he let out string—two hundred feet, five hundred, a thousand, and at last two thousand.

It hung in the air at a great altitude, its tail, the crudities of which were softened by the distance, waving beneath it. It soared high enough above the sunken waters of the lake and far enough away from the encircling cliffs so that it could surely be seen from the Lodge, if there was anybody at the Lodge to see.

He took what remained of the newspaper, tore it into round pieces the size of saucers, punched a hole in the center of each, and strung them on the kite-string in his hand. From time to time he would let one of these loose and watch it scud up the string to the kite. He hoped these might help to guide the caretaker of the Lodge to the base of the string and to himself.

But it began to be dusk, and still no sign

that anybody had seen the kite. After all, had the man fastened up the doors, prepared the building against the winter storms, and left? Had no stray and late-season tourist paused for a moment on the edge of the crater? He was beginning to debate whether to pull the kite in or risk leaving it up all night. He might have trouble or find it altogether impossible to get it to fly again in the morning, if he drew it in. But if he left it out, there might be snow or rain, the wind might grow too strong or die down, the all-night pull might weaken the string, and any of these contingencies would be hazardous to the kite.

At last, he heard the exhaust of a motor-boat in the direction where the trail led up from the lake to the Lodge. The staccato beats at first sounded a great distance away, but soon the *chug-chug* grew closer and friendly calls were added to the sounds of navigation.



"Where are you?" he heard. "Where are you?" repeated frequently and loudly.

"Here," answered Jim. "Here—over here!"

The boat came up to the little beach, and Jim, still holding the kite-string, greeted the caretaker of the Lodge.

"It's a good thing you flew that kite," Jim's rescuer told him. "I never dreamed anybody was down here. I thought it was a bird at first. But I looked over there several times from where I was working at the Lodge and thought it wasn't quite natural for a bird to do like that—to stay high up in the air above the lake in about the same place, not moving much and sort of hanging there like it was held up by a string from the sky. A smaller bird kept right underneath it. So I came down to the edge of the rim and got a closer look. You can imagine how surprised I was when I saw it was a kite and that the second bird was the kite's tail. I couldn't fig-

ure it out. The only way I could explain it was that maybe somebody had left it flying without my noticing it before. I took a squint through the field-glasses that I brought along and saw pieces of paper mounting up to it, and remembered how we used to do that when I was a boy. So I reckoned somebody was down here at the botton end of the kite-string, who was signaling and who needed help pretty bad. It made me kind of shiver when I realized it was probably some one everybody had forgotten and left at some part of the lake where he couldn't get back to the trail. So I beat it down here faster than I ever did before. Jim did you say your name is? Well, turn loose the string and let 'er go. It 'll probably land over on the other side of the lake somewhere. It saved your life and no mistake, for you might never have got out of here. Jump into the boat, Jim, and we'll go. There's a warm fire in the fireplace at the Lodge and something to eat. You must be

about frozen—here, put on my coat—and I expect you could eat a whole ham.”

“It sure was lucky,” he went on, as he started the motor-boat, “it sure was lucky you flew that kite. But how did you make it, Jim? Where did you get your stickem? When I was a boy we used to make paste out of flour and water. Did you have a tube of glue or paste in your pocket, maybe?”

“No, I used postage-stamps,” said Jim; “one-cent stamps,” he added, as though two-cent stamps and the multiple image of George Washington might not have had the same result at all. “You see,” he explained, “Ben Franklin’s picture on the stamps suggested the idea of a kite to me.”



*The Hickory Bank*

“**T**HE long list of American explorers, traders, and missionaries, whose deeds and sacrifices glorify the early history of the Pacific Northwest, were largely forgotten by a nation entranced with the story of the ‘Forty-niners.’ The far-reaching influence of Oregon as the oldest American territory on the Pacific Coast faded quickly from the memories of men. The Oregon Trail was already deep worn through the sand hills along the Platte and Sweetwater, Bear River and the Portneuf, by the wagons of the Oregon pioneers; it was lined with the crumbling bones of their cattle, and marked by the graves of their dead; yet instantly, after the passage of the thronging multitudes of ’49, it became known as the ‘California Trail,’ and to this day most men know it by no other name.”

—JOSEPH SCHAFFER.



## *The Hickory Bank*



ONE day in March, 1858, Jim Applegate, aged twelve, accompanied his father to the bank of a little Indiana town, where Mr. Applegate drew out the five thousand dollars for which he had sold his farm, in two hundred and fifty twenty-dollar gold pieces.

"It will pay you to keep an eye on that pile of gold," cautioned the banker.

"Tomorrow I'll put it in a hickory bank," said Mr. Applegate.

The banker smiled as if he caught the point, but Jim was puzzled.

"What is a hickory bank, pa?" he asked.

"It's a pretty safe sort of bank, son, when you're traveling," was all his father would say.

At the hardware store Mr. Applegate bought an inch-and-three-quarters auger with an extra long shaft, and then they went home. After that night Jim saw the money no more. Mr. Applegate kept his business affairs to himself, and neither Jim nor his mother knew where it was.

The Applegate family was one of ten families that traveled in prairie wagons that year from Indiana to Oregon over the famous Oregon trail. The two-thousand-mile journey was less dangerous than it had been fifteen years before, but there were still perils, the most serious of which was that from attacks by hostile Indians.

For that reason there was something of a



military arrangement to the march even of these ten wagons. At night the vehicles were drawn up in a circle, the yoke and chains of each being used to connect it with that in front. Within this circular fortification the camp fires were built.

On the eightieth day out they were attacked by a party of young Indians, who saw their advantage in the fewness of the whites. The skirmish was brief, but bloody and tragic enough for that small band of emigrants. They drove off the redskins, but lost two of their own number. One of the men killed was Mr. Applegate.

As they moved on from that dismal camp, Mrs. Applegate left her husband and Jim his father under the fresh-heaped mound upon the plain, and there also they left the secret of the "hickory bank." They ransacked the wagon from top to bottom; they looked through all of Mr. Applegate's private papers and notebooks; but they could not find

the money, nor did the papers contain any note or memorandum of its hiding place. No one could suggest any other place to look.

All that was left to Jim and his mother was a little over a hundred dollars in money, five cows, the ox team they were driving, the wagon, and the household effects that it contained.

Westward from Fort Hall, on westward into Oregon, the road was rough and mountainous. One day, as they were descending the rockiest and roughest portion, the Applegate wagon was in the rear. It was three o'clock in the afternoon. Jim's mother was driving, and he was walking behind, occasionally throwing a stone at one of the loose cows or calves that persisted in loitering. The road was like the bed of a cataract. There were abrupt breaks in the surface two and three feet high. The rear wheels would slide over these miniature precipices and hit the lower level with a suddenness and violence that

shook the whole wagon and rattled the pans and kettles off their hooks.

After one of these "jump-offs," somewhat higher than usual, Jim saw that the hind wheels of the wagon were turning drunkenly. They were leaning in at the top and out at the bottom. His mother drove on, unaware that anything was wrong, and he ran to catch up with her. A shining gold piece in the middle of the road caught his eye. Atalanta-like, he stopped to pick it up. Fifteen feet farther on he found another. They began to appear thickly, and he gathered them up as he went. Before he reached the wagon his mother had driven over another of the "jump-offs," and the tops of the wheels leaned in so far that they began to rub against the sides of the wagon bed. Mrs. Applegate stopped the oxen and leaned out to see what was the matter.

Jim came up and stooped down beside the rear axle. A yellow pile of twenty-dollar gold pieces lay there, and other pieces were rolling

out of an auger hole that ran like the bore of a rifle through the centre of the splintered hickory column of the broken axle.

That was the hickory bank.

# *The Dinner Call*

**D**URING the reign of good King Arthur, there lived in the county of Cornwall, near the Land's End of England, a wealthy farmer who had only one son, called Jack. He was a brisk boy and of a ready, lively wit, so that whatever he could not bring about by force and strength he completed by wit and guile. Never was any person heard of that could worst him, and he very often even baffled the learned by his sharp and ready invention.

**JACK THE GIANT-KILLER.**



## *The Dinner Call*



ANNE CHADWICK, all alone in the log cabin on the Umpqua, had nothing to read. It is true there were books in the cabin—a short row on a crude shelf—but she had read them all, most of them several times over.

If she only had an absorbing story, she could forget that she was by herself in that Oregon wilderness, five miles from another settlement. She could forget the ragged and stumpy clearing, in the center of which stood



her small log dwelling, closely surrounded by a rail fence and protected by no other stockade. She could forget the dark forest, dense with firs, that stretched back in every direction from the borders of the clearing. She could forget, most of all, the Indians, whom she pictured treading somber trails, perhaps toward the cabin, toward herself, with no man near to offer aid.

Her father, driving his slow ox team to Roseburg after supplies, would not return until late in the afternoon. And here it was only half past ten in the morning, and all her housework done up. Tired from working like a man in the woods, she had preferred a day of rest to the hard, jolting ride in the wagon. For that reason she hadn't gone with her father. Now she wished she had.

She was restless, somehow expectant of trouble, though her father had assured her that nothing was to be feared from the Indians. Nevertheless, he had left her the rifle.



It was a warm day in early summer. The door of the cabin stood open for coolness and for light. In that open doorway Anne found physical comfort in a home-made chair but she could not find contentment of mind. She couldn't just sit and nurse her hands. She simply had to read something, even if it was for the fourth or fifth time.

She got up and went to the shelf to find it. Her father, though something of a scholar, with a good library back in Ohio, had been able to bring but a few books on that long journey across the plains to Oregon.

Finally, she selected two worn volumes, and an oddly assorted pair they were. One was "First-Year Latin Lessons," the other was "Jack the Giant-Killer!"

In Oregon, in 1858, there were few pioneer girls who could read Latin, but her father had taught her its rudiments.

She fingered idly through the early pages of conjugations, declensions, vocabularies, and

short sentences. Through some mental quirk, she found one of these sentences taking forcible hold of her whole attention.

"*Cena parata est*—Dinner is ready." This kept repeating itself, willy-nilly, in her mind. She couldn't rid herself of the tenacious Latin and its translation. It was persistent, haunting.

She tried to rout it with "Jack the Giant-Killer," but she only added to her mental repetition. "*Cena parata est*—Dinner is ready" not only remained, but took on an equally importunate companion with which it raced back and forth in the channels of her brain. This companion was the couplet:

Whoever can this trumpet blow  
Shall soon the giant overthrow.

Those three Latin words and that foolish rhyme took utter possession of her mind. Over and over they repeated themselves. She even found herself once or twice saying them

out loud. First one and then the other, in succession, traveled round in her brain.

But suddenly the phrases released their hold and made room for fear. There stepped from the shadow of the firs into the border of the clearing a big Umpqua Indian. He paused for a moment and looked at her. Then he walked straight toward the cabin.

She was so scared she could not move. She sat and looked and waited for other Indians to appear. But none did. He was the only one.

The gate of the inclosure was at one side of the building. The Indian did not go to it, but instead came up to the fence in front of the door.

Anne suppressed an instinct to scream. Reason prevailed over emotion. She knew it was not wise to show fear or alarm. She saw that he carried neither rifle nor bow. After all, he might be friendly.

He made no move to climb over the fence, but stood staring at her.

"Good morning," she said, in as natural and controlled a voice as she could command.

But he said nothing, made no sign whatever that he understood.

"*Klahowya sikhs?*" (How do you do?) she tried him in Chinook jargon, but he did not acknowledge or return the greeting.

But even more disquieting than his silence was the way he continued to stand at the fence, casting his gaze through the doorway in exploration of the cabin.

Anne looked up at the loaded rifle resting across the deer horns over the door. This defence frightened her almost as much as the danger. The Indian unnerved her hardly more than the thought that she might have to use the gun in self-defence.

It would be the last resort. She would put off its use as long as possible. He continued to stand, a menacing statue, looking at her over the rail.

Hoping that he might possibly go away,

she sat down, picked up the Latin book, and began to read. The blurred pages gave her the picture of the Indian and of naught else, save that recurring sentence, "*Cena parata est* —Dinner is ready."

She laid down the book and took up "Jack the Giant-Killer." That little volume yielded nothing but its unwelcome poetry. To her mind, troubled as it was, there nevertheless came back the rhyme:

Whoever can this trumpet blow  
Shall soon the giant overthrow.

In spite of these returning distractions, she tried to think of some way she might make the Indian leave without having to use the gun.

Then suddenly the sentence and the rhyme no longer clogged her mind, but became stimulative and suggestive.

She got up and made a roaring fire in the tiny cook-stove, so that she knew the smoke

was pouring out of the chimney. She dragged the chair back from the door and pulled out the table, where the Indian could command a full view of it. Then she busied herself preparing a meal.

After a suitable lapse of time, and as it was drawing near to noon, she began, under the still imperturbable gaze of the savage, to set the table. But it was not only for herself she set it. She put down four plates with their proper accompaniment of knives, forks, spoons, cups and saucers.

From its peg she took down the cow's horn that had called men from the fields in Ohio, and stepped to the door.

"Dinner! D-i-n-n-e-r!" she called, at the top of her voice. "Dinner is ready!"

Then she put the horn to her mouth, and, with her cheeks ballooned like a bugler's, blew with all her might.

The sound broke the stillness of the woods, and it put the Indian in motion. He had no

intention of being caught there by the three men he supposed had been summoned to dinner by that loud blast. He fled across the clearing as fast as his legs would carry him and disappeared among the firs.





# *The Vanished Riders*

“**T**HE work must be so shaped that it is not only right in construction, but beautiful in design. When and where horses were first shod we do not know, but we do know that horseshoes were first made of iron 481 A. D. The primitive shoes were made of some soft material, like leather. Later soft metals were used. Some ostentatious ruler would, on certain occasions, have his horse shod with silver, and in some instances even gold was used. The horseshoe has ever been regarded as a charm. This superstition is shared by all nations and not least by the American people. Horseshoeing is a necessary evil—an unavoidable consequence of the domestication of the horse. We all concur in the aphorism, ‘no foot, no horse.’ . . . Shoeing kicking horses is both dangerous and hard labor.”

—SCIENTIFIC HORSE, MULE  
& OX SHOEING.



muddied earth with their passage. The two rows of tracks met and mingled just outside the stable door and entered together."

All the while he talked, the old Oregon pioneer walked back and forth, and traced out with his cane where once two rows of hoofprints had converged, like the point of a printer's bracket, at the threshold of this ancient stable. I had given this old man a lift in my car and had set him down here at his request. I found myself still lingering in response to his invitation "to stop a minute and hear about some history connected with this old barn."

He had justified his acceptance of a ride with the explanation that he was sixty-seven. The stable, though probably not so old, showed even more the ravages of time. Only a few of the ancient shakes clung to the roof, with the support of rusted nails; the rest had fallen through to the floor where they lay in decaying heaps, or, having slid over the

eaves, formed a rotting talus against the outer sides. The logs of the walls and gables, once straight and strong, now sagged in the middle, like a much used foot-plank over a brook. It had never had a window; its only opening was a doorway, now made lopsided by the leaning walls and from which the door was missing. The structure had plainly served no useful purpose for many years and was fast approaching utter ruin.

It undoubtedly dated back far enough to have "some history connected with it." The old pioneer, however, only whetted my curiosity without satisfying it, as he kept on talking about the two horses carrying riders as yet unmentioned, who, for some reason as yet unexplained, had taken refuge together or had met in conflict in that forsaken building.

"The tracks met here," he continued, "and went into the stable and never came out again."

These U-shaped prints, which he discussed

with such persistency and vividness, had indented a pioneer wagon-trail a full half-century before. Now, leading north and south, was the gleaming pavement of the Pacific Highway. Automobiles sped by in both directions while the old frontiersman talked about this dilapidated stable and a pioneer road muddied by a rain of fifty years ago and scarred by speeding horse-feet urged on by some great necessity.

"Who were the riders of the two horses?" I asked.

"Did I say there were two horses?" he inquired. "It looked like there were two, and the Indians thought there were two. But there was only one."

"Then there was only one rider," I said. "Who was he and what was he doing here?"

"No, there were two riders," he corrected me. "You see," he explained, with obstinate repetition, "The Indians found two rows of tracks leading into the stable and none lead-

ing out, and they found the stable empty. It was more than those Umpquas could understand. They were up a stump," he concluded idiomatically.

"Sir," I interposed, "I am fully as much up a stump as those Indians were. You have told me about the horse tracks and have mentioned that there were two riders, but you have not told me how they came to be there or what happened to them."

"I am sorry," he apologized. "I am getting old. I thought I had told you all that. Well, when Joe Abernathy was seventeen years old he quit working in Ed Ryan's blacksmith shop in Jacksonville, Oregon, and started north on horseback with Steve McCully, who was three years younger."

"Will you excuse me a moment?" I requested. Meaning to stop only for a little while, I had left my car standing on the edge of the pavement. I moved it out of the way of traffic and returned eagerly enough to hear



how the decaying stable, the horse tracks, and the Umpqua Indians had played so long remembered a part in the travels of Joe Abernathy, blacksmith, and his companion, Steve McCully.

It is not because I don't remember it all exactly as the old man told it to me, but for the sake of greater directness, that I am venturing to put down parts of it in my own words.

On September 18, 1869, Joe Abernathy celebrated his seventeenth birthday by nailing four new shoes on the feet of his black horse in preparation for a journey.

He wore a buckskin apron and a blue cotton shirt, the sleeves of which were rolled up above muscles that were rounded and hardened by sixteen months' work in Ed Ryan's blacksmith shop. His legs formed a vise for each upturned foot of the horse as he fastened the protective rim of steel to the pared and evened hoof. When the shoeing was finished,



the black shook his mane and stood speculatively on his new footing, while Ed Ryan came from his forge to look upon the result with pride. The work had been done with the exactness of a clerk fitting a lady's slipper. Hoof and iron edging met as smoothly as the handle and metal butt of a carving knife.

"Joe," said the blacksmith, still looking at the horse so perfectly shod, "when I saw how naturally handy you was, I said I'd make you one of the best horseshoers in Oregon. And, Joe, I've done what I said I'd do."

To the boy, there came a swift picture of the shoes on many horses' feet. He saw them furnishing a hold on the steep slopes of the Coast Range and striking sparks in rocky passes. Roads all over southern Oregon were trampled by shoes from Ed Ryan's blacksmith shop. Praise was good from such a master.

"Some day, Mr. Ryan," Joe replied, "I hope I can shoe a horse as well as you can and do it as fast."

"As well now, Joe," declared the blacksmith, "but maybe not quite so fast. I sure hate to lose you, Joe. The two of us have shod a lot of horses and could shoe a lot more. But you'll have full charge of your uncle's blacksmith shop in Roseburg and I reckon you're wise in goin'. But if you ever want a job, you know where to come. I hope you and Steve McCully have a good trip. By beginnin' on him when he's fourteen, you ought to make a good blacksmith out of him. He seems like a promisin' boy. You're lucky to be takin' him with you, for most boys around Jacksonville want to hunt for gold, and you can't get them interested in anything else. But even in a minin' country, minin' ain't the only way to make money. You know that, Joe."

Joe knew very well. He doubted whether any of the boys near his own age, who dug for gold and scorned him for working in a blacksmith shop, had as much. He was starting north in the morning with a new and shiny

revolver, his horse and saddle, and \$500 in money.

It was not a bad stake for a seventeen-year-old boy to be taking with him; but just now he was homesick for all that he was leaving behind. It was not easy to go away from the old blacksmith shop with its familiar smells of burning coal heated iron, and horses' hoofs trimmed for the shoeing, and with its pleasant sounds of hammers ringing on steel, the bellows blowing, and the sizzling of red-hot iron thrown in the tub to cool. Reluctantly he said good-by to Ed Ryan and led his horse out into the unkempt streets of Jacksonville.

The mining town was quiet in slumber when the two boys rode out of it early the next morning, Joe's black horse and the sorrel horse of Steve McCully jogging along at a fox trot toward the north. It was a hundred miles to Roseburg, and they expected to reach it in two days' travel. The surrounding hills were wrapped in fog as they followed down

the Rogue River valley. Above was not a clear sky, with the fading stars of dawn, but a solid scum of cloud.

"I'm afraid we'll have rain before we get to Roseburg," predicted Joe.

Settlements were thick enough at first. Dogs ran out barking at them and calves were bawling for their morning milk. The log cabins and clearings continued, but with less frequency, until they came, shortly after noon, to the Rogue River ferry.

As they rode their horses off the boat on the north side of the river, a group of Indian bucks, riding bareback, were waiting to get on.

"*Klahowya sikhs?*" (How do you do?) said the boys, in Chinook greeting.

"*Klahowya?*" gutturally returned two of the men. They were a group of friendly Rogue River Indians. The boys wished that their road might have kept in the territory of this tribe, but it now swung away from the

Rogue, over mountain ridges, toward the upper stretches of the Umpqua River.

The Umpquas, while not recently in hostile outbreak, were sullen and resentful. Their territory, at no time hospitable, at any time might become unsafe, especially for small parties. Young Split-Ear, their chief, was no friend to the white man. Some months before, a cavalry officer had arrested him for stealing, and this indignity had festered in his revengeful heart. Joe, having heard of this in the blacksmith shop from travelers, occasionally fingered the handle of his new revolver.

"I wish I had a gun, too," voiced Steve, as they descended toward the head of the Umpqua canyon.

The day, since morning, even on the hills, had remained sunless and dark, but here in this canyon the fog either had not lifted or had settled down again; and added gloom was given by the steep slopes, clothed with somber firs, that rose high on either hand.

“Do you think we’ll meet any Umpquas down here?” asked Steve.

None appeared but they saw a bear and two deer. The bear was eating elderberries by an efficient method all his own, drawing with his paws the heavy bunches sidewise through his opened mouth, stripping off the berries through his teeth, and letting the rich juices pour pleasantly down his gullet. The deer—a doe and a large fawn—lifted dripping muzzles from the cold current of the river, surveyed them for a moment, and fled up the slopes through the brush.

This was an unfrequented road, and as they penetrated down the canyon, they met no white man, and they were not disturbed by sight or signs of Indians. They became aware, however, of the increased threat in the weather. The clouds had darkened. There was a smell of rain in the air. Subdued rumblings of thunder rolled along the canyon walls. Soon the fog around them thickened to a mist.



"This will be a regular rain before morning," prophesied Joe, at camping-time. "We'd better make a 'shanty'."

They built a brush-fire beside a big fir log. Then, scraping away the coals, they spread a mattress of fir boughs over the area of earth thus made dry and warm. With slender poles and stakes cut with their hatchet, they made a lean-to, the lower end resting against the log and backed by it, the front end higher and left open. They thatched the roof with bark and boughs, and with boughs also weatherproofed the sides. They threw their saddles back against the log for pillows, and over the soft and odorous flooring they spread their saddle-blankets and the two additional covers that they had brought along. Their bed was ready—and it claimed them soon after supper.

In the night a timber-wolf howled in long crescendo. He was answered and silenced by a cougar that screamed from some distant ravine. Neither animal cried again, but Steve,

sleepless on his side of the bed, heard constantly the rush of the river, the horses cropping grass on the other side of the log, and the heavy drip of rain.

"Joe," he inquired after a while, "are you awake?"

"Yes. What's the matter?"

"Do you think the Umpquas will bother us tonight?"

"No. They would have showed up long before this. It's several miles down the river to their camps. They live in a big valley down there. We'll see them tomorrow, but they won't disturb us tonight."

"Have you got your pistol handy?" persisted Steve, not wholly reassured.

"Yes. It's right here under my head. Forget about the Indians, Steve, and go to sleep."

They were up and on the road early. They had spent a dry and comparatively comfortable night in their shanty, but all around were evidences of the heavy rain that had fallen.



Puddles stood in the road, the river was mud-died, and the overhanging bushes drenched them as they rode along. Now, however, the rain had ceased, and the sun was shining bright when they emerged from the canyon.

A small valley opened ahead of them. A half-mile farther on, the walls of this contracted again, but revealed, through the pass, a great valley stretching broadly on either side of the river. The valley was a peneplain, dotted with rounded knolls, from behind one of which, perhaps two miles away, the boys saw a thin shaft of smoke arising.

"They're just getting breakfast," observed Joe. "It's lucky they're off the road a good ways. Maybe we can get by without their noticing us. I hope so."

Watching that distant column of smoke through the pass, they failed to see immediately a more disturbing exhibit closer at hand—five moving objects along the hill, among the bushes, not far away from the pass itself.

Steve was the first to catch sight of them. "Look, Joe! Three bucks and two squaws up there on the hill."

"Yes, I see them," Joe replied. "They've got baskets and seem to be gathering something. What is it? The berries must be all gone. Is it hazel-nuts? They're probably friendly, but just the same, I wish there was some way to give them a wide berth."

He sized up the geography, hoping to find some way to avoid passing along at the foot of that hill. But there was no way. The river swerved in and this point jutted out to meet it, the last closing-in of the canyon wall before it gave back and made room for the broad and fertile valley beyond.

"Let's stop a minute, Steve," Joe suggested. "You get down and pretend you're tightening your saddle-girth. While I'm waiting for you, I'll have a chance to look them over. We don't want to let them know we're suspicious or afraid."

At this manoeuver on the part of the boys, the Indians all turned unconcernedly to picking among the bushes, gathering whatever fruit was the object of their harvest.

"I'd like to go by there at a run," Joe admitted, "but we'd better not. We'll just keep this trot. They probably won't bother us. I don't believe they're armed. I'll keep the pistol here on the left side of the horse where they can't see it, but handy—mighty handy—in case I need it."

As they approached the point, Joe riding on the exposed side of the road, the Indians continued to pick what the boys could now see were hazel-nuts—all except one squaw, who neglected her work to stare at them. The boys felt, somehow, though without particular reason, that there was evil intent in her observation.

Joe, however, called up to her: "*Klahowya sikhs?*"

"*Klahowya,*" she replied.

The boys kept riding, but the old squaw was hastening with sprawling steps and leaps down the steep hillside, making motions that she wanted them to stop and carrying a basket as she came.

"Wants to trade us her hazel-nuts, I suppose," said Joe. "Well, I'll stop and buy them; but you ride on, Steve, so you'll be out of the way, if the bucks on the hillside begin to act up. I don't like that squaw's actions, but you go on, Steve, and I'll see what she wants."

The squaw continued her awkward descent of the hill, but Steve had not gone ten yards before Joe saw a quick and sinister move on the part of the bucks. All three of them stooped suddenly among the thick undergrowth that concealed them to their waists. That stoop was but momentary. In concert, like men in physical drill, they sprang erect, with shafted bows in their hands.

"Run, run for your life!" Joe shouted to Steve.

But Steve, at sight of the bows outstretching toward him, stopped in uncertainty and fear. "Joe," he cried in panic, "I'm coming back to where you are!"

"No, no!" urged Joe. "I'm coming, too. Run, run for your life!"

As he spoke he brought his pistol into aim up the hillside. At sight of this, the betraying squaw threw up her hands with a scream. But it was not at her he aimed. He fired, and the straightened arm of a buck went limp and the bow dropped from his hands. He fired a second time and a third. Though both shots missed, they caused fear and flight.

But too late. Two swift arrows had already descended. The sorrel, bearing Steve, was running now, urged on by pain and anguish, with an arrow buried in his neck. Joe, following at full speed, emptied his revolver as he went.

Just beyond the pass, the sorrel, leaving a stream of blood behind him, began to slow up and stumble, then went to his knees and rolled

to his side, kicking in agony and struggling with broken gurgles for the breath that was shut off by the arrow in his throat.

Even as Steve freed himself without injury from the fallen and dying horse, Joe, halting alongside, pulled a foot from a stirrup and reached down his hands to him. "Here, get on behind me. We've got to hurry."

And the black, carrying both boys, needed no urging.

They looked back upon the receding scene of their conflict and their loss. The Indians, the squaws outdistanced, were hastening away in flight, or as swift couriers to set a camp in pursuit. Nothing was left at the pass except the prostrate bulk in the roadway, not yet entirely still.

"He isn't dead yet," sobbed Steve. "That awful arrow!"

Time was precious; it was everything. But Joe, tears in his eyes also, turned around, reloaded the pistol, rode back, and put the sorrel



out of his pain. The report brought a look, but no pause, from the Indians, who were still fleeing—fleeing toward the column of smoke beyond the knoll.

“They’ll rouse the whole camp,” said Joe. “It won’t take this bunch long, the way they are heeling it now, to get there and tell their story. They wouldn’t be in such a big rush if they didn’t mean to get a lot of men and follow us. A big party of bucks will be on our trail, and I hate to think what will happen to us, if they overtake us. It may take them a little while to catch their ponies. Maybe we’ve got an hour’s start. But we haven’t any time to lose.”

They weren’t losing any time. Even as Joe voiced his certainty of pursuit by the Indians, the black, discharging his great responsibility for speed, was taking the road with desperate urgency.

Steve, seated behind the saddle, with legs hanging over heaving flanks, served as senti-

nel. Each time he looked back, he did so with dread. As yet, however, he saw no distant signs of their pursuers.

The soaked earth impeded the speeding feet of the horse, which slung mud from his lifted hoofs and with his shoes branded the road with deep and ragged indentations. Steve wished that those tracks that were dropped by the racing feet and that lay in a long line behind them, were not quite so plain. Should they seek refuge by turning off the road, that trail of vivid tramlings would betray them. They could be followed as easily as a rabbit's tracks in the snow.

Joe, looking back at intervals, did not fail to see the tracks. They stimulated him to thought, also. But they were different thoughts from Steve's. Some vague recollection was stirring in his mind of a man somewhere to whom similar tracks had been not a hindrance, but a help.

A log cabin loomed up ahead. Joe had



heard of this and knew that it was deserted—that it was a barn once used by express-riders, but now empty and forsaken. It was no longer a shelter for horses or the stopping-place for white men from whom help could be expected. As he approached it, he meant to ride by.

Then, suddenly, that recollection became articulate—the chronicled flight, in olden days, of a horseman out of London.

He slowed up his horse and reined him into the open door of the vacant stable.

“What are we coming in here for?” excitedly cried Steve.

“We’re going to stay here a little while,” said Joe.

“With the Indians maybe not an hour behind us?” demanded Steve. “We can’t fight them in here. It’s no good for a fort. There are cracks between the logs. There is no window, no way out except this single door, and, if they guarded it, they could keep us here forever. We’ll be killed if we stay here.”

Joe made no further reply to Steve's objections, but, without loss of time, busied himself rummaging among the old litter of the stable floor and in the moldy stalls.

He found a box filled with rusty bolts, nuts, nails, and other odds and ends of hardware. Sifting through this miscellany, he picked out a quantity of horseshoe nails and an old file.

He then took his hatchet out of a saddlebag.

SURE enough, a little over an hour later, a score of Indians approached the stable, riding full speed down the road. Their leader, when he saw the tracks turn into the building, reined up with a suddenness that set his pony on his haunches. His followers, piled into a congested group by their momentum, reined up after him.

The leader, a big man whose right ear was split like a marked calf's, pointed toward the

stable and dismounted. It was Split-Ear, and the others, sliding from their ponies, gathered about him for his instructions. At his command, they scattered and, at a safe distance, encircled the stable. A few had rifles. The rest had bows. Almost immediately one returned in excitement to report a discovery. Beckoning the chief to follow him, he pointed along the road to where another row of tracks came in solitary emphasis from the north and likewise entered the stable.

This gave things a different color for the savages. The chief rubbed the cleft lobes of his ear in thought. Then he held up two fingers. The sign, in silence, was passed around the circle. No word was spoken, but they all knew that two horses were in the stable.

The door was closed. The cracks were not wide enough to reveal the interior from such a distance. They knew that the besieged inclosure contained a black horse and two boys, one of them armed with a pistol. But who was

this rider that had joined them from the north?

No sounds came to them—no sign of life or activity from behind the walls. The impressionable ground, carefully examined, had recorded no escape by foot or horse. They were in there—these two boys and the unknown horseman. But why didn't they make some show of defense? Why did they keep such silence that even their horses shared it!

At last Split-Ear fired into the door. Every Indian raised his rifle or put arrow to his bow, ready for the conflict. But there was no answering shot—no movement—no sound.

Another wait. Then one Indian, preferring risk to longer suspense, ran up to the stable, and, using the door as a shield, leaned cautiously over and peered through a crack. He gave a bewildered exclamation. There was no horse in the stable—no boy—no man! The building was empty!

He motioned to the others, and they came

running up, eyes to cracks, confirming the utter emptiness of the stable.

They looked at each other in amazement and wonder. They went back to the road. Along it still lay the same signs that pointed to the same conclusions. Coming from the south and circling into the stable were the tracks of the horse that had carried the boys. These tracks further up the road were mixed with the tracks of their own ponies, but traceable even there, because they were made with metal shoes.

Coming from the north, unmixed with other tramlings, still trailed that other horse's hoofprints down the road, from which they curved to enter the stable.

From these conclusive proofs, unchanged and exactly as they had found them at first, they looked in bewilderment at the cabin, unoccupied by horse or rider.

Once more in the wet earth they searched for signs going out of the stable; but once

more they found none. No horse had left that building since the rain; yet certainly two had entered. And now the building was empty.

There was only the one door. There was no other opening through which a horse or even a man could go.

This disappearance was impossible. Yet it had actually taken place. They were baffled by a problem they could not solve, by a mystery they could not explain, by a paradox no power was given them to understand. They mounted their ponies and rode back to camp like men who have beheld a miracle.

LATE that night, two boys knocked at the door of a darkened house in Roseburg.

"Who is it?" sleepily asked a voice from within.

"It's me—Joe. We're here, Uncle Frank. Steve is with me. Where do you want us to put our horse?"



"I'll be there and show you as soon as I get some clothes on. I'll bring a lantern."

The boys walked with him toward the barn, leading the black. "Where's your other horse?" he asked.

"We've just got one horse now," said Joe.

Joe removed the saddle and hung it up on a peg, while his uncle, from the abundance in the barn, brought a bucket of threshed oats and filled the manger with hay. Then, by the light of the lantern that set on the floor, he noticed for the first time the feet of the horse.

"Why," he exclaimed, "his shoes are on hind part before. He's shod backwards. I don't understand."

"We did it to escape from the Umpquas," Joe explained. "They killed Steve's horse this morning. I shot one and broke his arm. A whole pack of them followed us. We stopped in the deserted stable back there and I changed the horse's shoes, like I read once in a history book of a man doing."

His uncle lifted up one front foot of the eating black and looked at the shoe, the two calked heels of which projected toward the front.

"Pretty good idea!" he said approvingly. "The horse goes one way, but his tracks show he has gone exactly the opposite way."

"That's it," agreed Joe. "When we rode out of that stable it looked like we had gone in. The tracks showed that two horses went in and that none left, and yet the Indians found us gone. I expect they are still wondering how it all happened."



*The Blue Bucket Mine*

“**I**N Portland, in 1861, a gentleman whose name, I believe, was Chapman, gathered crowds around him on the street and told them of his having found the famous ‘Blue Bucket Mine’—the long lost mine of emigrant story. He then, and within a few days, completed the organization of about 100 men for the trip. All had high hopes of their coming fortune, for all had confidence in what the guide had told them. They believed that he had found the famous mine. But Mr. Chapman soon became bewildered. He would retrace his course; then go too far south, then north. Several times he got the company nearly famished for water. The men finally lost confidence and threatened the life of the guide. They gave him one more day and then if he found not the mine they would surely hang him . . .”

—G. W. KENNEDY (Condensed).



## *The Blue Bucket Mine*



AKER CITY 7 Miles" read a crude pine-board sign nailed awry on a tree along the Old Oregon Trail. The long morning shadow of the tree stretched across the parallel ruts worn deep by the wheels of immigrant wagons, and its tapering length, reaching beyond the roadside, pointed like an index finger to the half-concealed and crumbling bones of an ox. The worn highway and the weathered skeleton were vestiges of the westward movement into the Oregon country.

On this March morning, in the year 1869, it was not a dusty caravan that was passing. Only a single wagon crawled along the trail. Frank Blair, perched beside his father on the none too springy seat of the prairie schooner, with practiced hands guided and urged the team of oxen toward the town, now only seven miles away.

Frank and his father, though they had the equipment of immigrants, were not coming into the country for the first time from an eastern state. They were already Oregon settlers and were making this trip to town from their donation claim far back in the Blue Mountains.

This was the morning of their fourth day on the road. Frank's eyes were weary from watching the switching tails and creeping gait of the oxen, and his joints were all but disarticulated from the long hours on the jolting seat. They couldn't get to Baker City too soon to suit him.

They were making this slow, hard journey not only to lay in a supply of groceries, but to buy garden seed and chickens.

It had been six months since either of them had tasted a green vegetable or an egg. Venison, mountain grouse and other game had been plentiful. Their wagon contained a good many dollars' worth of peltries as a result of their winter trapping and hunting. But luscious steaks and tender drumsticks, while a welcome change from bacon, could not long take the place of eggs and vegetables.

All through the winter they had looked forward to this trip to town to secure a small flock of poultry and seed with which to plant a garden. Frank had let his imagination dwell on horticulture and its green products, fresh and crisp and damp with morning dew. Evening after evening he had read an old seed catalogue until its corners were dog-eared. And hens had cackled to him in his dreams while he slept.

Mr. Blair was almost as much excited as the boy over the Plymouth Rocks they planned to buy and the little piece of ground they expected to plant. Most men who came into the Blue Mountains were miners, but this man and his son were concerned with clearing out a home in their narrow, isolated valley. The lure of gold had not touched them with its sinister contagion. No vain search had made them discontented; no discovery of a sparkle in the sands had blunted their simple tastes. Their desires and expectations were centered not on sudden wealth but on nests of eggs and green rows in a garden.

They arrived in the mining town of Baker City shortly before eleven. Stabling their oxen in a wagon-yard, they were ready to explore the town, to begin their errands and, most of all, to eat. But in Baker City meals were not served at all hours at the whim of every patron. They were served regularly three times a day—at six, twelve and six.



"We can't get a meal for an hour," said Mr. Blair. "Son, do you want to take this ten dollars and buy the chickens, while I sell the hides? I'll see you at noon at Wing Kee's restaurant. Eggs are so high, they'll probably want to sell hens like horses. But get them as cheap as you can. If you run across a good Domineck rooster, you might pay two dollars for him, if you have to. I'll buy the garden seed where I sell the hides. Let me have the list you made out."

Frank, though he went about the quest of poultry systematically and thoroughly, met with repeated discouragements. He traversed the residence streets, where chicken yards and scratching hens were a common sight, but he knocked at the doors and politely inquired only to be told, "We get ten cents apiece for eggs and can't afford to sell our hens."

After being turned down along whole streets, Frank began to feel like a book agent. It was almost like offering an affront to try



to buy chickens in Baker City. At last he came to a small inclosure that contained only two Plymouth Rock hens. With little hope, he knocked at the door. He was in luck, for the woman was soon moving away. She sold him the hens but she charged him two dollars and a half apiece for them.

Hobbling their feet, he carried them to the wagon-yard and placed them in the wagon. By this time it was approaching noon. So he made his way to the Chinese restaurant. Just back of this popular eating-place, on a side street, was a pen of chickens that had previously escaped his notice. They were a sorry, bedraggled looking flock. The one rooster was especially woebegone and superannuated. But this ancient fowl still possessed one characteristic trait unimpaired. A woman came out from a dwelling alongside, carrying a pan of scraps, which she threw over the fence in front of the slumberous bird. Thereupon, he perked up, kicked a gnarled foot through the

offering and summoned the hens from a far corner. Then, with all possible haste, he gobbled up the choice portions before they arrived.

Brought to the point of dropping all discrimination, Frank was willing to negotiate for such aged specimens as these. "Do you want to sell some of your chickens?" he asked.

"They're the Chinaman's," the woman replied. "Since Mr. Gibson has been away to the mines I haven't kept any chickens. I feed these because it's a handy way to get rid of my sweepings and kitchen scraps. You'll have to see the Chinaman about buying them, for he feeds them to his boarders and likes to advertise 'chicken dinners.' Maybe you can buy the rooster. Nobody could possibly eat him, not if he were boiled a week."

Frank was not overly impressed with this Methuselah, which, however, was better than no rooster at all. So he entered the restaurant to buy him.

Several aproned Chinamen were working, but Wing Kee, whose name was on the sign outside, was the man he sought. It was five minutes to twelve by a big clock on the wall. Several guests in rough garband with bearded faces, were already seated at the tables, and others were arriving. But his father was not yet among them.

He walked up to and addressed a stooping Chinaman, "I want to see Mr. Wing Kee, he's the boss, isn't he?"

"Yeh, Wing Klee blossom. You wantem job? Blig man there."

Not knowing whether to call the proprietor Mr. Wing or Mr. Kee, Frank played safe by saying to the portly Chinaman: "Mr. Wing Kee, I want to buy some hens and a rooster."

"I sellem clock, allee light."

"I don't want to buy a clock," protested the boy. "I want to buy a rooster."

"Clock allee same looster."

Frank thought he meant a clock would get him up early in the morning the same as a rooster would. Still, he couldn't quite understand why the man was so anxious to get rid of his restaurant clock that seemed to be keeping good time there on the wall. Wing Kee, seeing his lack of understanding, beckoned to him. "Flollow me. Showem clock."

Frank followed him to the back of the restaurant, through the kitchen filled with the smell of cooking food and the jabbering of Orientals, into the chicken inclosure.

"Hai, you clock, wakem up!" cried Wing Kee, and the old rooster that squatted with tired, half-closed eyes, came slightly to life.

"I sellem clock chleap. Six bittee."

"I'll buy him," Frank agreed. "What will you take for three hens?"

"No sellem hlens. Takee clock, gimmee six bittee," he said, lifting up the ancient chanticleer into Frank's arms and pocketing the seventy-five cents.

After the sale had thus been successfully terminated and there was no longer any chance for the buyer to back out, he guilefully explained:

“Men eatem hlens. No eatem clock. Velly old. Bleakem tleeth. Cookem one clock velly old, allee same this. Makem mliner mlad. Knockem waiter sklywest with dlumstick. No cookem this clock. Sellem you.”

The woman who had fed the chickens was again standing at the fence, enjoying the sale. The Chinaman, seeing her, let a triumphant, smile-like wrinkle come into his imperturbable face as he remarked, “Misse Glibson, I sellem clock this boy.”

But after this brief show of pleasure for what he had put over, he strove to restore the satisfaction of the boy with a word of reassurance, “Misse Glibson, clock gotem velly good clow, yeh?”

“Yes, Kee,” agreed the woman, “he still crows all right.”

Following the Chinaman back into the restaurant, Frank saw his father seated at a table and joined him, tying the rooster's calloused legs and placing the bird by his chair while he ate.

"What luck, son?" asked his father.

"Two hens and this rooster. I couldn't buy any more in town anywhere. People won't sell their chickens."

"That'll give us a start," said Mr. Blair. "We'll set all the eggs and have a nice flock of pullets by winter. This old timer, if we look after him carefully, will last till some young roosters come on. I got a good price for the hides. I bought the provisions and all the seed on your list. They're in the wagon."

After lunch the following day, they yoked their rested oxen and started home. It was dark the fourth day when they drew up in front of their distant cabin. While Mr. Blair unyoked and turned loose the cattle, Frank took out the chickens.



He set them in a row high up on a limb, out of reach of animals, to roost.

It was good to wake the next morning to a *cock-a-doodle-do* from the tree. It was a cracked old voice that was lifted in a crow that hardly measured up to the Chinaman's statement. But it was like music to the man and the boy, and they let him repeat his summons several times just for the home-like pleasure of listening to it. Then, early as it was, they got up, for they were eager to put in their garden.

The spot which they had picked out was a small alluvial fan at the mouth of a shallow gulch. Here a deep, rich loam had collected, and a short distance up the gulch was an ever-flowing spring, the waters of which, if properly directed, could be used for irrigation during the dry summer days. It was not to be a large garden. They had bought only a small amount of each kind of seed. But it would be ample for their needs.



They worked up the ground with a spade and rake so that the black and sweet-smelling area showed not a single clod. With a string they marked off straight and evenly-spaced rows. No garden tract in town was ever prepared with greater care. When everything was ready for the planting, they poured out the seed into cups and dishes and pans.

At this juncture, Mr. Blair mopped his sweating face with his sleeve and looked at his watch. "Why," he said in surprise at the quick flight of the morning, "it's one o'clock. Let's get something to eat. We'll do the planting this afternoon."

The plain lunch they had, stirred Frank to pleasant prophecy. "Pa, we'll soon be eating real meals. We'll hardly know it before we have the little round red radishes and the long white ones will grow fast in that soil. The hens ought to begin to lay as soon as they kind of get over the trip. They don't seem to know how to rustle for themselves, though. They

hang around and want somebody to feed them. I guess I'll have to take to digging some worms and catching grasshoppers for them, till they kind of get onto the ropes up here."

They returned to work, without washing up the dishes or taking their usual rest.

"Let's see," said Frank, "the peas go in first over on this side. I'll plant them, if you'll cover them."

He stooped down to pick up the basin that contained the peas. But he did not pick it up. He straightened up again before his hands touched the rim of the dish. What had happened was so completely unexpected, was so tragic in its meaning, that he stood for a moment without speaking. He was like a woman who opens a jewelry case after a burglar has been in the house. There was not a pea in the dish. It was empty. So were all the other dishes. There was not a seed left. A few filmy husks faintly littered the crockery, and that was all.

Father and son looked at each other in dismay. For the Blairs there would be no garden. The inviting black earth had grayed a little under the drying of the midday sun. In that rich soil, so carefully prepared, now only rank weeds would grow. Another long trip to Baker City was utterly out of the question. All possibilities of a garden vanished. Some dandelion greens picked from the slopes and camas roots dug from the meadows, would be all the vegetables for which they could hope now. They had dreamed of this garden and now at the threshold of its realization it was gone.

It took no detective to see what had happened. Chicken tracks were all about. The old, bad combination of chickens and a garden had worked out in the old, bad way. In town this would only have caused coolness between neighbors, but here it was a tragedy. No other seed were procurable and these seed were locked irrevocably in the craws of three chickens.

There was nothing they could do. They would have to get along without a garden.

They walked away from the tract of smoothly-raked ground, back to their cabin, and sat down in silence and disappointment. Frank, taking up the seed catalogue, turned through it ruefully. Not since his mother had died, three years before, had he seen his father look so old, so weary, so dejected. The rebounding hope that generally characterized him, was all gone now. In truth, for both of them, the bottom was knocked out of everything. The loss of those garden seed in that far mountain valley was so great because it was so irretrievable. It was not what the seed cost. It was the fact that they could not be replaced.

"Son, we haven't washed the dishes yet," said Mr. Blair at last, seeking comfort in work. "Let's wash them up and go hunting. Maybe that'll make us forget what the chickens have done for us. One thing is sure, they

ought to lay after this. If they don't, we'll kill them and put them in the pot."

"Say, pa," cried Frank, "let's do that now."

"Do what?"

"Kill the chickens."

"What's the use of doing that? I was just talking. Chickens aren't responsible. It's natural for them to eat food when they find it. They didn't know they were doing anything wrong. It would be foolish for us to get mad at them and kill them."

"That isn't what I mean, pa. The seed is all there in their craws, isn't it? We can get it by killing the chickens. It isn't hurt. It will come up and grow just the same."

"Why, sure, son, we could do that. But then we wouldn't have the chickens."

"That's right, we can't have both. But the idea makes us better off than we were—it gives us a choice. Before we had to take the chickens and lose the garden. Now we can take either. I vote for the garden."

"Of course. So do I, and I suppose the sooner we get the seed, the better."

They found the three fowls resting in all innocence under the shade of a tree. The rooster, unconscious that he was not to die of old age after all, was drowsy and content with fulness. Frank, seeing them squatting there so comfortably, regretted the necessity that called for their sacrifice. Certainly, if he had been going to kill them for retribution, he would never have gone ahead, but it was sound economics that called for their execution. He picked them up, one after the other, taking the precaution to feel each craw so he could spare either of them that might not have been a party to the feast, or only slightly so. But the garden seed had been a family meal. All three had eaten to the limit.

They salvaged first the seed consumed by the hens, each taking a hen and emptying the seed into a dish. To this end Frank had searched for poultry in Baker City.



Mr. Blair began sorting at once, while Frank reclaimed the seed the rooster had eaten. His craw had been distended by many feasts in his long life and was capacious. The miscellany of seed—beets, radishes, lettuce, carrot, and many peas—filled the dish.

The boy sat down and, taking the dish between his legs, began separating the seed into various other dishes. "Look pa," he said, "at the peas I'm finding. Say, here's a funny pea," he exclaimed. "No, it isn't a pea. It's a gravel. No, it isn't gravel, either," he cried excitedly, jumping up. "Pa, I've found a nugget. Look at it—it's a big piece of gold."

He dropped into the hand of his father a heavy and ruddy lump, somewhat larger than a pea, with three small and rough elongations. It must have been hard swallowing for the rooster. Mr. Blair tested its weight in his palm and dug into it with his knife. Then he, too, rose to his feet, his face radiant with new and extravagant expectations.



“What does it mean, pa?”

“What does it mean?” repeated Mr. Blair. “I’ll tell you. It was the luckiest thing ever happened for the chickens to eat up our garden seed. We were the glum ones sitting there in the cabin a while ago. Now we’re good as rich. There’s a gold pocket somewhere close by, right here near our cabin, on our claim. Money? Why, we’ll have more of it than we’ll know what to do with. We should worry about eggs and vegetables now. We’ll let the hotels do that when we make our stake and pull out of here. There’s no telling how rich this lode might be.”

“It might be the Blue Bucket,” he continued, his hopes rising as he talked. “You know, an immigrant wagon stopped for noon somewhere in Eastern Oregon. A little girl wandered about, playing with a little toy bucket. When it was time to go, her father picked up the bucket to put it away, and as he did so three or four nuggets fell out of it.”

“‘Why, sister, where did you get these?’ he asked. ‘I jes, founds ’em, papa. There’s lots more where I was playin’, but I pours ’em out, ’cause they’s so heavy. Is they any good?’ ‘Heavens, yes, sister, come and show papa where you found them.’ But as her father followed her here and there, she kept complaining, ‘Papa, I can’t finds the place no more.’”

“And they never did find it, son. Nobody ever found it. Many a man has looked for it, but Nature hid it away in the Oregon hills and didn’t leave a clew like a pirate does to the treasure he buries. And think of it, son, maybe it’s ours—maybe the Blue Bucket Mine is ours. That’s the way things happen in this world. Miners hunt for gold all their lives and die poor. We come up here to homestead and run onto a bonanza like this. Look and see if there are any more nuggets in the dish.”

“No, that’s the only one,” reported Frank, sifting through the contents. “I can’t imagine

where he picked it up. The little girl couldn't tell her father—she forgot. The old rooster can't guide us—he's dead. If we just knew the ground he's been over. Let's begin looking now," he suggested, the fair garden of his dreams fading completely from his desires.

"We might as well plant the seed, since we have them," said his father, practically. "But we won't need to sort them anymore. We'll plant them just as they are, even if they do look funny when they come up. It won't be much of a job to get them in the ground that way, and vegetables will come in handy and add to our food supply while we mine."

Unashamed, they placed this mixture in the fertile earth. Where pride and care had characterized their efforts before, now was only haste to get it done. This garden had become a perfunctory task, something which at most would provide food for better labor. Their minds were filled with visions of gold—of a rich, perhaps inexhaustible, pocket

somewhere close about their cabin, where an aged rooster had reached in a careless bill and swallowed a nugget, and where perhaps other nuggets, unswallowable and as big as marbles, lay in heaps sufficient to fill a water bucket or a dishpan. The coffers these not of a Captain Kidd but of the unlimited hills.

After their hurried gardening, they still had some time before dark for prospecting. They tracked the chickens wherever they could and projected halted trails through the grass and weeds. They dug into any likely-looking spots and made excavations wherever the chickens had scratched.

They found nothing that afternoon, but at daybreak the next morning they were again at their explorations, in an eager hope that amounted almost to certainty that before the day was over there would be the sound of metal scraping metal, as pick or spade sank gratefully into a gravel bed where the gravel was gold.

The two hens were plucked and put carelessly to boil while they went about their search for the rich deposit that had stirred the imaginations and hopes of so many pioneers. The rooster, which was too old to cook, they did not disrespectfully toss away. They took a little time from their feverish quest to bury him.

"Someday," said Mr. Blair, "we'll put up a tablet here, with something like this chiseled on it: *Erected by Joseph Blair and His Son, Frank Blair, Over the Grave and to the Memory of the Rooster That Discovered the Blue Bucket Mine.*"

But that day likewise passed into the starlit darkness of a mountain night and the gold still lay, as for centuries it had lain, unrevealed and untouched, in mysterious secrecy. The one three-pronged lump that Mr. Blair now carried in his pocket and that he took out frequently to examine anew, was all they had. But their expectancy was still strong, for their

probe with pick and shovel had not yet extended to many promising places within the foraging range even of a fowl so lacking in adventure and so old. Upon this chanticleer, now resting in an honored grave, their thoughts were focused, even while they ate for supper the drumsticks of the over-boiled hens. They were already building up around him, hero-like, a post-mortem personality, for with his erratic meal he had abruptly and completely changed the prospects and interests of their lives.

The days went on until they amounted to a week. "It's somewhere close," insisted Mr. Blair. "Those chickens never got far away. The more I think of it the more I believe it's the Blue Bucket. During all these years it might have got covered up and this nugget just happened to be on the surface where the rooster grabbed it with his hungry bill."

For two weeks, a month, two months, they sought for the lode that was necessarily so



close at hand and that was yet so hard to find. A strange, ironic destiny seemed to control this treasure, revealing it to a chicken and to an innocent child, but keeping it hidden from the eyes of those that would recognize its value and put it to human needs. Not another nugget had come to light, although they had worked ceaselessly during the daylight hours. The garden had come up and was full of weeds. The days were hot and dry but the waters of the spring had not been directed so as to provide irrigation.

This garden and all the work connected with the homestead had been neglected, while with pick, grub-hoe and spade, and even with the plow, they upturned all the land roundabout.

"Son," said Mr. Blair, with belated inspiration, "I'll bet the mine is right here in our garden. The gulch runs down here. It's an ideal place. Let's dig up the garden. It's strange we never thought of it before."



Frank looked at the spot, weeds and vegetables intermingling. It was different from what he had dreamed, from what he had planned. But the long days of futile digging and of vain search, had caused the dream and the desire to recur momentarily. Hoeing and water would still save it, still give it something of practical value and even something of beauty. He felt a vague regret for its destruction, but it was too vague and too weak to stimulate a single word of protest. He was, in fact, the one to strike the first blow to dig it up, for he believed the gold was there.

Soon everything green was mixed up with the dug earth, and such tips and stalks as were on the surface were wilting under the hot summer sun. "It's got to be here," declared his father, with persistent hope, after they had worked almost all the afternoon. "There's gold somewhere close—we know that. We've dug nearly everywhere else. The chickens never got very far away."

But at dark they had found nothing. Down under the deep accumulations of the alluvial fan, they finally reached gravel, but no nuggets, no gold.

A week more of digging in places not yet explored and redigging in the most likely places previously covered, found them still no richer in treasure and much poorer in food, for by this time they had only a few days' rations on hand. These, without the garden on which they had counted and without the game which they had taken no time to hunt, had run out sooner than they expected.

With their guns they could go out and bring in fresh meat, but very soon they wouldn't have anything to go with it. If they wanted bread and coffee and sugar, they had to go to town. They killed a buck for meat on the trip. But they kept postponing it. "Son," said Mr. Blair at breakfast, "what if we went up to where the creek bends and dug a new channel for the water and found the Blue

Bucket Mine down under the boulders and pebbles of the bed, wouldn't it give us goose-flesh to remember we almost started today? The rooster probably found the nugget at the edge of the water while he was getting a drink."

At the end of this enterprise, three days later, he got out of bed telling about two places he had thought of over night, or that had come to him rather by the divination of a dream, and Frank, with fresh enthusiasm, turned loose the oxen that he had coralled for an early start. In this way they continued to dig in the unrewarding earth.

At last, with all the flour gone and after several meals on venison alone, they knew they could put off the trip no longer, and in forced accord they yoked the cattle and got under way.

This time they urged the fat oxen on, so that late in the evening of the third day they arrived in Baker City.

On the way, Mr. Blair had said little, but, while Frank drove, had sat on the seat and surveyed and resurveyed in his mind the geography of the homestead, figuring and always figuring where the gold might be.

"Son," he cautioned, as they approached the town where lamps were making a feeble glow in the darkness, "whatever you do, keep absolutely quiet about the gold. If the men down here learn about our finding the nugget, it'll cause a stampede, and that's just what we don't want. We'll find the gold yet, because we know it's there. I've been thinking maybe the rooster got farther away than we thought. He was tame and old but he might have wandered quite a distance off. He might even have got lost and found his way back again. I've also figured out it might be under the cabin. The chickens were under there, you remember. Keep quiet about it and the next time we come to Baker City this old wagon will be carrying a fortune."

Next morning at the Chinese restaurant, as Frank with his father entered for breakfast, the proprietor, with the long memory of his race, recognized the boy and asked with dry humor:

“Bluyem other clock?”

“Not this time,” Frank replied, and went to a table with his father.

Coming out, his father reached into his pocket for money with which to pay for their meal. As is customary with men who do not use purses, but carry change loosely in their pockets, and at times of expenditure draw out a handful with a little flare, Mr. Blair lifted to the Chinaman's view a miscellany of coins far more than adequate to settle for their breakfast. But there lay also in his palm something that was not a coin. It was the nugget with its three elongations, the whole lump now brightly burnished and glowing with wear. The quick eye of the Chinaman saw it before the white man could get it back into

his pocket. Mr. Blair realized that he had made an unfortunate mistake and that he had done, incautiously, the very thing he had warned his son against doing.

Why hadn't he kept the nugget in a pocket by itself? Why had he put it where he might thus bring it unintentionally to view? Now the cat was out of the bag. Their find would be common knowledge. They would be followed to their claim. Miners from all over the Blue Mountains would hear about it, until such search as they could make would be in competition with hundreds. News that they were in the region of gold would spread with quick contagion and the greedy and unsuccessful prospectors would flock with picks and shovels to this new scent. Their monopoly was gone. Even the Blue Bucket could be divided and redivided until the separate parts would no longer mean a fortune, their part as small as the rest. So the man thought. So thought the boy.



But Wing Kee only said: "Misse Glibson's nlugget. Three plongee, allee same that. Longee ttime lost. Misse Glibson lookee. I lookee. Allee plain now. She freedem my chlickens allee ttime. Clock eatem nlugget. Boy bluyem clock. You givee back nlugget—Misse Glibson velly glad."





*The Fourth of the Far  
Fifteen*

**“W**HO knows a mountain?  
One who has gone  
To worship its beauty  
In the dawn;  
One who has slept  
On its breast at night;  
One who has measured  
His strength to its height;

One who has followed  
Its longest trail,  
And laughed in the face  
Of its fiercest gale;  
One who has scaled its peaks,  
And has trod  
Its cloud-swept summits  
Alone with God.”

—ETHEL ROMIG FULLER.



## *The Fourth of the Far Fifteen*



AT SIX P. M., a whole hour late, the branch-line train pulled into Klamath Falls, Oregon, served now by the limiteds of the Cascade Route, but having then only this casual railway connection with the outside. A crowd, regardless of cooling suppers at home, waited eagerly at the postoffice for distribution of the mail. In that crowd was a boy who expected nothing for himself, but who was there to take to his parents what the postal clerks might place in Box 119.

When he turned the key and opened the window of that box, he found an official-looking envelope, addressed neither to his father nor his mother but in four typewritten lines to: "Mr. Scott Howe, Leader Pelican Patrol, Boy Scout Troop No. 1, Klamath Falls, Oregon." He opened the envelope, read the letter and left the postoffice in haste and excitement.

As quickly as he could, he gathered up the seven other members of the patrol for an impromptu meeting at the home of Professor George Griffin, the scoutmaster, to consider the proposals of the letter, which was from the Panther Patrol of the Boy Scout troop at Hood River, Oregon, and which read as follows:

Will the Pelican Patrol climb Mt. Shasta to light red fire on the summit at exactly ten-fifteen the night of July Fourth? If so, this patrol promises to be on top of Mt. Hood at exactly ten o'clock the same night to signal with fireworks. The quarter of

an hour interval will keep each party from being blinded by its own light.

This proposition is made for two reasons: One is to clear up a scientific point. No one has ever seen Mt. Shasta from Mt. Hood or *vice versa*. They are two hundred and fifty miles apart and the question is: Does the natural curvature of the earth bulge up the intervening Cascade Range so as to break the line of vision? In daytime, the snow-covered tops are not bright enough to focus the sight to the best advantage at so great a distance. But brilliant fireworks at night would make the peaks visible from each other if the roundness of the earth doesn't interfere, and to find out definitely whether it does interfere is one reason for this climb.

The other reason is that we can furnish a Fourth of July spectacle which has never been equalled anywhere. Portland's 260,000 inhabitants and many smaller towns in Oregon, Southern Washington and Northern California can see one or the other illuminated mountain, so that more than half a million people will enjoy the fireworks we put on. Drug-gists will mix up red fire for about seventy-five cents a pound. We'll need close to a hundred pounds for each mountain. But the celebration committees of Portland and the other towns ought to be willing to finance the trips. If you wish, our scoutmaster, Sheriff John Taylor, will see what can be done about this.

Only six of us can make the climb: John Taylor,

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scoutmaster, Jess Wilson, Ben Clark, Jack Sutton, Gus Peterson and Andy Applegate.

We have only about six weeks before the Fourth, so if you can't climb Mt. Shasta let us know by return mail if possible and we'll submit the proposition to one of the patrols of Medford, Oregon, or Sacramento, California.

Yours very truly,  
(Signed) JESS WILSON,  
Leader Panther Patrol,  
Hood River, Oregon.

"Medford or Sacramento," repeated Scott, as the letter was finished. "What do they take us for, tenderfeet? Let's write the letter now and tell them we're on."

"Yes, let's write it," they all agreed. "You'll be our guide, won't you, Professor Griffin? You've climbed the mountain once or twice."

"Yes," consented the scoutmaster, "I'll go along. But I want to be sure you boys fully understand what you're undertaking. Shasta is one of the highest mountains in North America and climbing it is a hard job and may



prove a dangerous one. If you burn the red fire at ten-fifteen, you'll have to stay on the summit from then till morning. It'll be the longest night you ever spent in your lives, and cold—say! Eight sets of teeth will clatter all night—nine sets, for mine will join the chorus. But I believe every boy here is equal to the task. I wouldn't agree to go along if I didn't think so. Hands up, all who want to make the climb."

"You see it's unanimous," announced Scott. "Let's write the letter."

"Before we do that," said Professor Griffin, "we must take another vote. You're forgetting your parents. Go home, each one of you, and get their consent. Then we'll write the letter."

No parental veto being reported, they jointly composed the following reply:

You don't need to take your proposition to Medford or Sacramento. This patrol will be on top of Mt. Shasta to shoot off red fire at exactly 10:15 on

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the night of the coming Fourth of July. We shall get the direction of Mt. Hood by compass and shall be looking for your light at exactly ten o'clock.

You bring up an interesting point as to whether the curvature of the earth's surface is sufficient to cut off the view from one mountain to the other. Mt. Hood is 11,225 feet high; Mt. Shasta is 14,440. We believe these will be high enough watch towers to enable us to see the two hundred and fifty miles. We can hardly wait for the time to come to settle the question by the actual test of sight.

With our scoutmaster, Professor George Griffin, as guide, all eight members of this patrol will undertake the climb, their names being Scott Howe, Ed Stockton, Walter Underwood, Mike McGee, Ralph Weed, Cal Eaton, Sid St. Clair and Al Whitaker.

We shall be glad for Sheriff Taylor to arrange for the expense money as you suggest. We can take up further details by correspondence and probably our scoutmasters can meet for a conference a few days before the Fourth.

Sincerely yours,

(Signed) SCOTT HOWE,

For the Pelican Patrol.

Plans went ahead, receiving much notice in the newspapers. A score of Fourth of July posters in as many cities and towns, had prominently displayed as a feature: "Pyrotechnic

display from top of Mt. Hood, 10:00 P. M.  
Top of Mt. Shasta, 10:15 P. M.”

Plenty of money was donated for the enterprise. Other gifts were made also. Among them was a watch and a compass apiece for the scoutmasters, and, most prized of all, two American flags from the Daughters of the American Revolution. These thoughtful women had had special staffs of hickory made, spiked with steel, the silken banners themselves being incased in waterproof tubing. A note to each patrol explained that, to keep the flag from being at all an encumbrance, the staff could be used by the boy carrying it as an alpenstock. There was no more beautiful thought in connection with the whole program than of these two flags fluttering their bright folds at each other from those far distant summits on Independence Day.

The district forestry office in Portland offered the use of four carrier pigeons, two for each patrol, one to be let loose on the way up,

preferably at the beginning of the final climb, the other when the summit was reached. In case of accident during the climb, the second pigeon, if it itself escaped disaster, could carry news and bring help.

Each patrol took regular hikes and hardened themselves for the climb. The Mazamas, the famous mountain climbing club of Oregon, gave help and advice. The scoutmasters had a conference in Portland. By the last day in June everything was in readiness.

Meanwhile, waiting for their part in the great event, the two silent mountain peaks lifted far upward toward the summer skies their crowns all powdered like a cavalier's wig.

## II

IT was still dark when the suburban roosters began lustily to herald July second, but the sleeping town of Hood River paid no at-

tention. The town slept on, unheeding and unawakened. It did not hear a motor truck pass through the streets and out upon a south-bound road or the cadenced tramp of feet upon the pavement like soldiers marching.

It was the Panther Patrol, with Sheriff Taylor as guide, starting for Mount Hood, which, more than twenty miles away, stood unseen in the morning darkness. They might have ridden part of the way, or even all of the way, to the timbered base of that great mountain, but they preferred to walk. Their light army packs contained nothing but their lunches and their mess kits.

The truck, bound for Cloud Cap Inn, 6,500 feet up at timber line, carried their equipment. This consisted of one hundred pounds of red fire stored in ten water-tight bags, a toboggan, a coil of rope, a compass, two carrier pigeons in a box, a hatchet, an ice ax, three flashlights, six alpenstocks, one of them—the flag—encased part way like a



traveler's umbrella, two pup tents, ten woolen blankets, extra clothing to the extent of six pairs of woolen socks, six suits of woolen underclothes, and six heavy rough-neck sweaters. The truck also carried a supply of bacon, canned beans, hardtack, raisins, unsweetened chocolate bars and other plain food. This was most of the equipment, though there were other odds and ends, like goggles for the eyes and grease-paint for the face.

After this hard day of uphill hiking they might have slept and eaten at Cloud Cap Inn, but they did neither. Among the last wind-beaten trees, not far from the lower edge of the white expanse, they set up their pup tents, cut boughs for mattresses, cooked their suppers, flipped coins to see who would be the lucky ones to sleep in the middle and repaired by threes to their tiny quarters, with all their clothes on, including some of the extras. Only their shoes were taken off.

Their camp preparations had included the

building of a rock coop for the pigeon box. This was further protected by a covering of boughs, with an air opening to leeward.

They needed no alarm clock to get them up in the morning, and at that frosty altitude crowing roosters would have been like painting the lily or bringing coals to Newcastle. An arctic cold, against which three covers are no adequate protection, is the best kind of inducement for early rising.

In one of the tents a flashlight turned on the face of a watch showed that it was only 3:00 A. M., but the boy announced:

"I'm going to get up."

"No, it isn't time," protested the boy in the middle. "It isn't nearly time."

"I'm going to get up, too," declared the boy on the other side.

This seemed like rank desertion to the boy in the middle. "What's the big idea," he demanded, "of getting up in the middle of the night?"



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“To build a fire and thaw out—that’s the idea,” they replied, putting on their stiffened shoes.

Five minutes later, the boy thus left exposed, both port and starboard, to the creeping chill, reversed his former opinion and called to the firemakers:

“I believe it is time to get up.”

They spent that day, July third, in getting their red fire half way up to the top. They tied the ten sacks of this securely on board the toboggan, using for this purpose part of their rope but leaving a long length to pull with. They harnessed themselves by tying three sticks at intervals along the rope, two pulling at a stick. By this arrangement, also, if anyone lost his footing, all he had to do was to hang on. One hand of each was given over to draft purposes. Each outside hand carried an alpenstock.

The baggage was no great impediment at first, but before long it began to show a lot of

resistance. By the middle of the morning they were dragging it along by slow and difficult stages. To make matters worse, the July sun distilled tropical weather upon them as they labored. They put on goggles to protect their eyes from the glare, their faces being already protected from snowburn by grease-paint, lamp-black and even patches of court plaster. Forcing the sled to follow them, they toiled slowly up the steepening slope. They pulled the toboggan across crevasses on snow bridges, and, lifting it up, carried it like a stretcher over warty areas of lava outcroppings. At last, with some satisfaction, they looked up at the summit and down at timber line whence they had come. In actual distance, they had come more than half way. But how much steeper it was above than below. Soon they would have to leave the sled and transfer its distributed load to their backs.

“Let’s call it a day,” said Sheriff Taylor. Before descending to camp, they cached

the toboggan in as protected a place as they could find and anchored it by means of the rope to the neighboring rocks, so that it would not be lifted up and thrown back down the slope by the night winds that whip these altitudes like a winter gale at sea.

After the toil of the day, sleep yielded less easily to the interruptions of the cold, so the night seemed reasonably short.

At five A. M., on the Fourth of July, the mobilized patrol stood round their extinguished camp fire, all ready for the final ascent. It was the Fourth of fair weather for which they had hoped—no cloud, or fog, or threat of rain. The white slopes stretched upward before them in the starlight.

They took only their alpenstocks, their pack equipment, their extra clothes, the ice ax, the flashlights, the compass, some hard-tack and chocolate which they carried in their pockets, and the pigeons, the first of which they meant to turn loose when they reached

the cache of the toboggan. In addition, Sheriff Taylor carried a canteen of water at his belt.

"Forward march!" he called, and soon the crusted snow was crunching under their feet.

They reached the sled at nine o'clock. A boy took one of the pigeons and warmed it under his sweater, while Sheriff Taylor with a sharp-pointed pencil wrote a note in tiny script. He fastened this into the band on the pigeon's leg, and the boy, with a final stroke of a caressing hand along its glossy back, let the messenger fly.

The pigeon spiralled overhead twice, three times, and then, with its mysterious and unerring sense of direction, started off toward Portland.

They now turned to the work of the day. They looked up at the precipitous incline of white and down at the sled with its ten bags of red fire.

"This is the end of the journey for the to-

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boggan," announced the sheriff. "After this it will be *a la* pack mule. I'll take three in my pack. Jess and Ben are big fellows and can handle two apiece. Jack, you can take the pigeon, besides a bag, can't you? Gus and Andy can take a bag apiece."

They planted weary feet upon the summit at four o'clock and almost wished they hadn't arrived so soon, for the wind, cold and piercing, assailed this pinnacle with savage fury.

First of all, they turned loose the pigeon. Then they lost no time in putting on their extra clothes. Five of them formed a circle, within which as a dressing room the sixth in turn effected a change. In this way he got some protection from the icy blasts during the brief period when shoes, shirt and trousers were off and the extra socks and union suit were not yet on.

The additional garments made a lot of difference but were far from affording complete comfort against the buffet of that chill and



lofty gale. It was now only four-thirty. They would have to get along as best they could for nearly six hours longer.

For a while they found ample entertainment in the view spread out before them on every hand. To the north rose the white peaks of St. Helens, Adams and Rainier. With one sweep of their eyes they took in three hundred miles of the mighty Columbia's course—from where it flowed through desert sage and dune to where it met the ocean in a white and tumultuous embrace. Southward their gaze leaped the zigzag ridges of the Cascades to Mount Jefferson, Mount Washington, the Three Sisters—where their strained vision abruptly stopped, powerless in spite of all the bright daylight that lay over the ranges to make the final reach to Shasta.

To this far-leagued landscape they made an appropriate addition. They took the protective covering from the flag, planted the staff deeply in the snow and loosed the clean,

bright standard to the play of the winds, which by this time had begun to die down but which still blew strong enough so the slender pole bent back and forth, and the silken banner now contracted in shimmering folds and now stretched this way and that towards various sections of the fair land it symbolized.

At right angles to Portland, in a basin among the exposed rocks, they prepared a place for the red fire but dared not pour it out of the bags and spread it, for fear it would be blown away.

The sun went down, the woods and valleys and all the wide-spreading world faded from view, and the stars came out. Here and there, patches of light denoted the presence of far distant towns and cities.

Except to determine the time at frequent intervals, they moved about and exercised to keep warm without the use of their flash-lights, all three of which, with unweakened batteries, would be needed to light the steep



way down the mountain to camp after their own illumination and the illumination they hoped to see.

While waiting, they watched the fireworks in Portland and other towns below. From that height and distance, they looked like miniature pyrotechnics in Lilliputia. Rockets and Roman candles that were no doubt hailed with "Golly, that's a high one," seemed to them to shoot upward only a foot or two and to be wire-like shafts of light no bigger than the filament of an electric bulb.

At last, it was five minutes to ten. They poured the red fire out of the bags, spread it, and at a point of contact fluffed some dry cotton for a fuse.

One boy held a watch, while another stood ready with a match.

"Ten!" cried the timekeeper.

The lighted match was touched to the cotton at the edge of the mealy-looking substance spread out there like food for chickens.

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All have seen a dark hall made light to its furthest corner with an ounce of photographer's flash powder, but few have seen a hundred pounds of red fire in simultaneous and magnificent conflagration.

Suddenly, at the wholesale ignition, the dark and lofty world where they stood grew brighter than day. Crimson snow, crimson rocks and crimson faces of one another. No alloy of smoke, no alloy of violence—the mealy chemical, with its mixture of red shellac, gave all its energy to the creation of a pure and dazzling flame. It was too brilliant for the eyes to look upon. It was more intense than the sun's rays at summer noonday and redder than those rays at setting. For a minute only, it held vivid sway over the ruddied mountain top and in the night above. Then, upon the instant, the transitory splendor faded and the redescending darkness settled down ten times more profound than before.

At twelve minutes after ten, standing in a

row, they faced toward the south in the direction the compass showed them Shasta to be. During these three minutes they were on guard against the chance of any discrepancy of time, though the watch that the sheriff held in his hand had been regulated to the second with Professor Griffin's.

They stood in peering expectancy, focused eyes alert to catch the faintest gleam of that distant signal. The watch said fourteen minutes after ten. Then the second hand went round till it reached forty.

"Watch for the light," cautioned Sheriff Taylor. The hand reached sixty. It was ten-fifteen. The time had arrived for the greatest of all triumphs of human sight.

But they saw nothing. There was no light, no signal, no disturbance of the universal darkness southward across the ranges.

At less tension, but still hopefully, they waited five minutes more, but they waited in vain.

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They forgot that the roundness of the earth might have shut off the signal, forgot that the red fire on Shasta might have burned unseen by them. They were sure this could not be—not after the long distances they had seen that day. And they knew that if the other climbers had failed, danger and accident were back of that failure. There came to them all one thought—one fear:

“What has happened to the Pelican Patrol on Mount Shasta?”

### III

IN Portland, thousands shared this concern. The modern newspaper works fast. A few minutes after the light on Mount Hood, an edition was on the streets telling about it. The raucous chorus came from the newsboys:

“Morning p-a-per! Illumination of Mount Hood. Boys lost on Shasta! Oregonian p-a-per! Paper, mister?”

The account read as follows:

"The most unique Fourth of July event ever staged in Oregon and probably the whole nation was the illumination of Mount Hood. Precisely at ten P. M., the time appointed, a bright red light shone way up in the sky above the eastern horizon. It lasted for fifty-five seconds and was greeted with cheers from the thousands congregated on the bridges, wharves, roofs and the hills back of town, and with vigorous and long-continued whistles from the vessels in the harbor.

"But what has happened to the boys that climbed Mount Shasta to illuminate it in a similar manner?

"Three pigeons have returned to the cote of Forest Examiner James McDuff. Two of these are from Mount Hood, where we know the boys are safe. The one from Mount Shasta was turned loose at 8:30 A. M. and reached Portland at 12:30 A. M., making the two hundred and fifty miles in four hours. It



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brought this abbreviated message: 'Jly 4, 8½ A. M. ½way up slope fm timber line. Evry-bdy O. K. Pel. Patrol.'

"The second pigeon was to be released as soon as the patrol reached the summit. Why hasn't it arrived? What has happened to the boy climbers of Shasta?"

### IV

WHAT indeed had been the fate of the Pelican Patrol while toiling up the snowy slopes of Shasta? By what danger had their progress been halted? By what catastrophe had they been overwhelmed?

With practically the same equipment as the Hood River group, they had started out from Klamath Falls on the morning of July second. They went by train to Sisson, California, where they secured packhorse transportation for the bulk of their supplies to timber line.

They had spent July third, as had the Panther Patrol on Mount Hood, pulling their loaded toboggan as far as possible up the mountain-side.

From the place of the sled's cache, at 8:30 A. M. on July Fourth, they had released the first pigeon and had started on the long march upward.

There are several available routes up Shasta but they selected the one ordinarily used by the Sisson guides. This was over a snow field flanked on either hand by two sharp ridges, or hogbacks, which buttressed the mountain on that side and which lifted almost vertical walls a thousand feet above the snow. These had serried and crumbling skylines from which the boulders tumbled in mighty cannonading. Luckily, the glacier was wide enough so they were safe from being crushed. They did not go up the center, however, but kept as far to the right as they safely could. They did this because the snow



not only sloped down but rather steeply from left to right. Their march was along the lower side.

A little after eleven, they came to a crevasse that stretched athwart their path, without a bridge of snow anywhere in sight. The fissure extended clear across the snow field from one ridge to the other. They might have found a crossing at the end of it, along the base of the nearest ridge, but they had seen too many huge stone come catapulting down, to expose themselves even briefly in that constantly menaced locality.

But it was necessary to get across. Further along, toward the right-hand ridge, they found a place where the cleavage was only six or seven feet wide. Not all of them had ever qualified for the broad jump in track events but they decided this could be leaped in safety, though they realized that six feet on safe and level ground is quite different from six feet over an abyss.

They stood cautiously at the edge of the crevasse to test the solidity of the bank, and peered down its sheer and gleaming walls. Although out at the center it was probably hundreds of feet deep, here it was not more than fifty or sixty feet.

"I'll go across first," said Professor Griffin. "I'll hold one end of the rope and jump. You boys hold the other end so you can break my fall, if I tumble in."

He made it across without mishap, as did four of the boys. Then, before the others jumped, they gave their attention to getting the loaded toboggan across. How to do this had puzzled them at first, but they had hit upon a plan which they now carried out.

The rope was attached so that a length extended from each corner of the sled. The two front lengths were thrown across to the four boys and Professor Griffin on the far side, the other four boys managing the rear ropes. When the toboggan was safely over, those on

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the far side pulled it several yards out of the way, towards the cliff at the right, where they saw a smooth ascent for its runners when they should start upward. They left it there, detached the rope, and returned to their place opposite the four who still had to cross.

Just then a crash of thunder came from the summit. While climbing, they had seen a cloud resting on the top, but had thought little of it. That it might continue to hang there to affect their illumination, was not taken seriously, for they knew that such foggy wreaths were accustomed to disappear as quickly as they formed. But now the whole volume of the cloud was black and sinister and pregnant with electricity. They were to witness one of the sudden thunderstorms that rack this peak, when all the world below is calm and bright. The angry cloud boiled round the pinnacle and in its turmoil shot out dark and opaque arms of vapor a short way over the ridges. The thunder pealed and re-

verberated and seemed to shake with its awful claps the whole vast bulk of the mountain, while tongues of lightning shot out and hurled zigzag streaks against the crags.

It was a spectacle to intimidate and alarm, but strangely enough, the fair weather where they stood was scarcely disturbed. The four remaining boys began to cross the crevasse. Now the rope was held on the farther side, not directly in front of the person jumping, but off to one side, so he would not be impeded by it or get entangled in it.

Sometimes as a boy was running to make the leap, he was stopped at the very brink by a sharp clap of thunder, as one stops at sight of a snake. It did not strike him; it was the terrible sound that halted him in his tracks.

In a few minutes, all had safely crossed except Scott. His alpenstock was the flag. Holding this in his left hand and the end of the rope in his right, he jumped, as the others before him had done.

As he landed, he stuck his staff like a spear in the snow at his feet. This snow, weakened by the repeated jars, began to cave, so that Scott was able to save himself only by grabbing hold with both hands of the rope which the boys pulled towards them. The snow, on which he had stood, fell with a crash as he quitted it.

He was safe, but the alpenstock—the American flag—had gone down into the crevasse with the cave-in.

“It’s the flag,” said Scott, “and we must rescue it.”

“Yes,” agreed Professor Griffin, “I’m sure none of us feel like leaving it down there. You boys hang onto the rope and I’ll go down after it.”

“Let me,” asked Scott. “I’m lighter than you. You’ll be stouter holding the rope. And I was the one that lost it. Let me go.”

Professor Griffin hesitated. Then he looked over the edge from a safe place and



saw the staff sticking up from amidst the fallen ice at the bottom. It didn't appear particularly hazardous. "You can go," he said.

They threw the end of the rope down into the crevasse, all eight of them hanging on, while Scott scaled down hand over hand to the bottom.

"I'm down," he called and they felt the weight go from the rope. "I'll have to do some digging to get it out."

As they waited to pull him up, the detonations above rolled in long crescendo, ending up with deafening crashes. A bolt of lightning bigger than a cable shot out like a vivid arm from cloud to ridge top—the ridge on the left and farthest away. There was another crash but this time it wasn't of thunder. At the impact of the lightning, a rock as big as a house left a gap in the skyline of the cliff and leaped down a thousand feet. Up to this time the patrol had been safe but they were safe no longer.

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The jar of those hundreds of tons of granite set moving the snow on the steep mountain-side. They saw it start and they knew what it meant. The snow field, as previously noted, had a second slope from left to right—from where the stone had fallen to where they stood. It would come—already it was coming—diagonally down, and they would be in its path. It was beginning to gain momentum and a spray of snow dust rose from its surface. If they could have run then, they could have gotten out of the way. But they had a duty to perform.

“Catch the rope,” they shouted to Scott. “An avalanche! Catch the rope!”

As they spoke, they jerked the rope but it came up without weight. In their anxiety, they had jerked it out of his hands before he had firm hold of it. They gave it length and let it back down again. But by now the rushing, roaring snowslide was practically upon them.



Terrible are the decisions demanded by peril, but brave men with only a second of time somehow choose when nothing is left but a choice of hazards. What would you have done? That rope with its weight of nearly a hundred and forty pounds could never be pulled out in time.

"Drop the rope and run!" came the sharp command from Professor Griffin. "Run—past the sled!"

He raced after them, but held on to the end of the rope and went no further than its length. As he stopped, there was a tug at it from the bottom of the crevasse.

"He still expects us to pull him out," thought the scoutmaster, and that was his last thought before the flood of ice and snow engulfed him in its outer edge.

The boys, whose flight had saved them, came running up, white with terror.

"Professor Griffin!" they cried, fearing that he was dead.

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"I'm all right, boys," he said, fighting his way out of the snow that nearly buried him. "Just stunned a little—one hard piece of snow. The rest was loose. I still have the rope here. How's Scott?"

At the question, there was one fear in the hearts of all. Where once had been the crevasse was a ridge of snow. Their comrade was buried fifty feet down under all this.

"Don't give up hope, boys," the scoutmaster urged. "If he was not injured and still has hold of the rope, we can get him out."

They dug and disinterred the rope back to the original edge of the crevasse. Then they made a trial pull. The rope stuck, but whether from the weight at the end or because of the great thickness of snow through which it went and which was congealing around it, they did not know.

"He may be stunned," said the guide. "Certainly, he can't stay down there long without being smothered. We must work fast."

We must dig down to him. We'll reach him by following the rope."

No time was lost. They pulled the toboggan apart and, using the runners as shovels, began to dig a well down through the new snow to the boy buried below.

At first they threw the snow out by armfuls, but when they had descended over their heads they faced the serious problem of getting it out of the well.

"Sweaters," suggested one. "We can use them for buckets."

"Just the thing," they all agreed.

The necks and sleeves were tied with cords. They were filled and handed out until the well became too deep; then they were pulled out with the free length of the rope. Rapidly the boys dug. Never was a shaft sunk so quickly.

"Scott! Scott!" they shouted as loudly as they could through the thinning roof of snow. But there was no answer. They pulled on the

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rope. It gave. After the first frozen grip of the ice was loosened, they might without difficulty have pulled it out. They knew now that no one had hold of it below.

"I fear the worst," admitted Professor Griffin. "But we must recover the body."

So on they dug, drawing up in rapid succession the sweaterfuls of snow, sinking deeper and deeper the shaft which they no longer dared hope would reach their entombed comrade in time.

Then the boys on the rim heard a call. "Listen," they said, "didn't you hear him?" They leaned attentively over the excavation, thinking the voice had ascended from there. Those in the well also stopped and listened, but no sound came up to them from under the snow.

Was it their imagination? Were they hearing ghost voices? No, for the call was repeated, this time in plainly articulate words and unmuffled by any intervening wall of

snow. "Here I am. Over here. I'm coming."

The boys on the rim looked in the direction of the farther ridge and saw Scott making his way toward them across the wide and disheveled trail of the snowslide.

"What are you doing?" he asked when he came up. "Digging my grave?"

"No," they replied. "We thought we were digging you out of your grave. How in the world did you get out?"

"The crevasse widened out at the bottom," he explained. "At its floor it is forty or fifty feet wide, running back under each wall. This is what saved me. When I heard you yell 'Avalanche!' I ducked under the shelter of the upper wall, still holding onto the end of the rope, for I didn't know what would happen to me. But when the snow and ice poured in, it didn't hurt me at all. The fill widened some at the bottom as it was pressed down by its own weight from above but it didn't spread all the way to the back edge of

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the cavity. A little cave or tunnel was left, big enough for me to crawl in, and I want to tell you I lost no time in crawling. I yelled to you fellows that I was all right, but I wasn't sure you'd hear me through all that snow. A good deal of the way it was so low I bumped my head against the ice above and couldn't go on all fours but had to slide along on my stomach like a snake. I lost all sense of direction, I guess. I thought I was heading for the nearer cliff, but it turned out to be the farther one, so I had to go under the whole width of the snowslide. I thought I never would get through crawling, but I finally came to where the crevasse was no longer filled with snow. I climbed out over the end of the fill to the top, and here I am. And, you see, I've got the flag."

A detailed account of the rest of their journey to the top would be an account of toil and hardships, of weary climbing on the part of boys already worn out with fatigue and ex-



citement, of delays and disappointments in the dark that overtook them, and the heavy fog that encompassed them.

After the summit plateau of the mountain is reached, Shasta Peak, a craggy pinnacle about four hundred feet high, must still be scaled. At the base of this, only a few minutes before ten o'clock, they turned the pigeon loose and, with the red fire on their backs, began to climb, hoping yet to emerge from the fog in time to see the signal of the Panther Patrol.

It was a slow ascent, for there in the dark a slip meant a sheer fall and almost certain destruction on the rocky talus below. At ten o'clock, the thick and opaque vapor still enveloped them above and below, and towards the Mount Hood signal fire, whose 250-mile gleam was destined never to gladden their eyes. Sight of it, for those nine climbers, was as completely shut off by the fog as if by a drawn window blind.



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They were forever bereft of the reward of that climb, but its duty might still be performed.

So they continued to drag heavy, weary bodies, yard by yard, up the almost vertical wall of the pinnacle. Finally, the leader was greeted by the countless and gleaming stars overhead, and the clammy touch of vapor was lifted from his face.

The last 30 feet of the spire, like a lonely tower on an off-shore reef, rose above a smooth-bosomed ocean of fog. They went on upward to the top, spread the red fire, touched a match to the cotton fuse, and unfurled the flag to the sudden burst of light.

But it was half past ten. They were a quarter of an hour late.

Would the light, coming so tardily, be of any avail? Or would the question of the roundness of the earth shutting off the view from one mountain to the other, remain a question still?

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"THEY'VE failed to reach the top," declared a member of the Panther Patrol on top of Mount Hood. "Let's go. We'll freeze if we stay here much longer."

"It's only twenty minutes past ten," replied Jess Wilson. "They may be late. Let's don't take any chances. I move we wait ten minutes more—till half past. Ten minutes isn't long."

But it seemed long, interminably long, to the group standing there with chattering teeth.

"Is it ten minutes yet?"

"No, only three minutes."

"That L-l-latin I l-l-l-learned," came a shivering witticism, "*tem-tempus fug-fugit*. It's wro-wro-wrong."

Time does eventually pass, however, even for a sheriff and five boys turning to ice. At last the slow-moving watch hand reached ten-thirty.

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## 164 *The Fourth of the Far Fifteen*

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“No use to wait any longer. Let’s go.”

But before they had lifted their feet for the march, before their eyes had been turned from their southward gaze, a boy cried out: “I see it! Look, I see the light!”

The signal came to them unmistakably as they watched—came from Shasta two hundred and fifty miles away. They saw it like a faint flash of lightning reaching dimly above a distant horizon, like a phosphorescent glow in a forest trail, like the far-away lantern light must have looked to Columbus on first approaching the Western Isles.

# *The Earth's Curvature*

BY J. W. BOOTH

**“H**OW was the real form of the earth found out?

Brave and daring men left their homes, and travelled, without turning about, until they came to the very places they set out from.

What does that prove?

It proves that the earth is round like a ball.

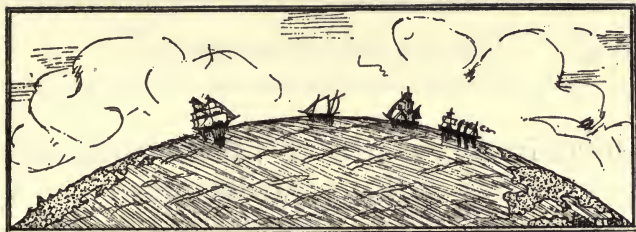
What other proof have we that the earth is round?

When a ship is coming in from sea, the tops of the masts are seen first, then the sails, then the hull.

Why does that prove that the earth is round?

Because if the surface of the water were flat, the hull would be seen as soon as the masts.”

—FROM AN OLD GEOGRAPHY.



## *The Earth's Curvature*

By J. W. BOOTH



IN the April number of the *Improvement Era* for the current year (1925), there is an article under the heading, "The Fourth of the Far Fifteen," by Alfred Powers, the

reading of which gives one a real thrill in Boy Scout work—adventure and patriotism as well as an interesting lesson in the study of the rotundity of the earth and the problem in arithmetic of determining the curvature of this great globe on which we live. That

article is well worthy of a place among the masterpieces of Boy Scout literature.

I have never seen either of those wonderful peaks in question. Mount Hood is near the northern border of Oregon and Mount Shasta, almost due south, is well over into the State of California, 250 miles away. They are near the meridian of 122 west longitude in the "utmost bounds of the everlasting hills," and the writer of this is today at 37 east longitude in Aleppo, Syria, reading that fascinating challenge of the Hood River "Panthers" to the Klamath Falls "Pelicans" to scale the frozen heights of Shasta and receive, and answer, in "tongues of fire," their night-time signals from the frosty summits of Mount Hood.

The *Era* lost not one jot of the interest so creditably concealed in its pages, even in its long postal journey of "half the convex world around," and I am wondering if I can hold the interest of my readers in this simple tribu-



tary supplement to that very masterly article above mentioned.

Before I had finished reading the second page, I stopped and asked myself if Mount Hood, 11,225 feet high, could be seen from Mount Shasta, 14,440 feet in altitude, with 250 miles stretching out between them. On a one-minute hasty calculation, I concluded it could not be seen; but a second and more studious thought, with the aid of a simple diagram, as is equal to Cut 1, a curved line with two projections, told me that one peak might be seen from the other on a clear day with a good glass. How did I come to make that mistake in my first calculation and then so easily correct it, all in less than five minutes? That is the interesting feature of this discussion and I want my Boy Scout friends to see how simple that problem is of measuring the curvature of the earth.

Now, when I was a boy at school, I was conspicuously noted for not being noted for

anything in particular, and least of many things was I noted for being a mathematician. My brothers, John E. Booth and A. L. Booth of Provo, were both well up in that branch of science, and, though they did their best to get me to "see the point," they finally concluded that I was a better absorber of their sympathy than of their lesson in science.

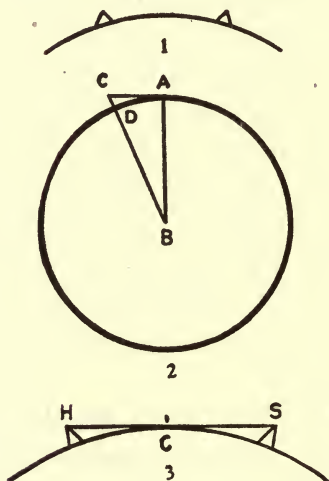
One day, A. L. made a casual remark about the "curvature of the earth." Immediately, I was anxious to know how to work such an example, but, right there and then, I made up my mind to discover the method myself. I supposed, of course, it could be worked by trigonometry or calculus or mensuration. I was not even ankle-deep in algebra nor acquainted with the angles of plain geometry, yet I decided I would learn, without text book or teacher, how to calculate the curve of this big ball of land and sea whose surface area is equal to two hundred millions of square miles. I thought about it but would

not talk to anyone on the subject lest I should get an idea not strictly original. I reflected, but refused to read about it, so anxious was I to learn it myself.

After 16 years of waiting for an uninterrupted spell of leisure to delve into my hobby problem, I secured a quire of paper and pencils and went to work in earnest. In less than a week I had it all worked out to the hundredth part of an inch. I discovered and wrote out my own rule. Here it is, copied from my old note book of many years ago: "*The earth curves in one mile, about 8 inches, or .6636+ feet, and the curvature increases as the square of the distance.*"

It would be easy for a mathematician to discover that rule or another of his own wording, but it is not so easy for a boy who doesn't know how. The joy of discovery was well worth the time spent on it. All I used was simple eighth-grade arithmetic. If you don't want to spend so much time in learning

how to work the problem, just look at Cut 2 and you will have it in less than 10 minutes. You know that the square of the longest side



of a right-angled triangle is equal to the sum of the squares of the other two sides.

Let the circle represent the circumference

of the earth. A B—the radius of 4,000 miles, nearly, A C—the distance from point at sea level to the summit of a peak, say, 500 miles away. Now, D B is equal to A B, being radii of the same circle. The square of A B plus the square of A C equals the square of C B and, since that is true, it follows that the square root of the sum of the two shorter sides must be equal to the square root of the square of the long side, and the difference between the square root of the long side and the square root of the radius of the circle would equal the height of the peak. And it is clearly seen that a light could not be observed at A from any point lower than the summit C, 500 miles away. So when I read that it is 250 miles from Mount Hood to Mount Shasta, I said: *“The square of 250 is 62,500, which multiplied by .6636+ gives us 41,475 feet, and a light less elevated than that could not be seen from a sea level point 250 miles distant.”* The combined altitude of Mount Hood, 11,-

225, and Mount Shasta, 14,440, as given in the article, would be only 25,665 feet, so that a light even of sun brilliance on the top of Mount Hood, with Hood on the top of Mount Shasta, could not have been seen 250 miles away, from sea level. Old Everest, nearly 30,000 feet high, with Mount Hood on top of it, could scarcely be seen from a ship in the Indian Ocean, 250 miles to the south.

Then, wherein was I mistaken in my first conclusion that one of these peaks in question could not be seen from the summit of the other? I *was* mistaken. They *can be seen* and the boys have demonstrated it.

Now, a glance at Cut 3 will convince the reader that if a light at C could be seen from both peaks, H and S, at once, then a fire at the summit of each of them could be seen from the other peak. If H and S were of equal altitudes, then their summits would be visible from each other at a distance just twice as great as that from which a light, as at C,



could be seen from either peak. But Mount Shasta is 14,440 feet high and, calculating conversely, we find the square root of 14,440 (a number which multiplied by itself makes 14,440+) or 120+, and this divided by .6636+, the curvature for one mile, equals 180 miles, a distance from which, at sea level, that peak could be seen. Likewise, Mount Hood, 11,225 feet high, the square root of which is practically 106, divided by .6636, would give us 159 miles. This total distance then, 180 miles plus 159, is 339 miles, and were there only open sea level between them the two peaks could display their red lights one to the other even though they were 339 miles apart.

Looming up thousands of feet in the Cascade Range, between Mount Hood and Mount Shasta, and only a trifle out of direct line, are Mount Jefferson, The Three Sisters, Diamond Peak, Mount Thielsen, Mount McLaughlin and others, almost any one of which



had it been at mid-distance and in direct line of light, would have kept the rays of Shasta's red fire from the eager eyes of the boys on Mount Hood on that night of July 4th, at 10:30 P. M.

Now, Boy Scouts, after I have given you this one peep into the method of measuring the rotundity of the earth, let me give you an example for practice.

You are on a mountain 10,000 feet high. From the top of this you can see to the north a peak 100 miles away. To the east is one 50 miles away. Another to the south 60 miles distant, and the fourth to the west 40 miles away from you. You have a true spirit level with you, and, whichever way you test it, you see that the summit of each peak is on a dead level with that from which you take your measurements. What is the altitude of each of the four peaks?

The Teton Peaks Council of Boy Scouts of America have recently sent me some interest-

ing letters and literature from which I am getting some splendid lessons to hand over to some of the boys and girls of Syria. Any of that famous "Fifteen" of Hood River or Klamath Falls who happen to read this article, will favor us if they send personal letters with their greetings to the boys of the Near East. Tell me if I have missed my calculation on your wonderful giants of the Cascades, even with the natural curvature of half the world between us.

*Aleppo, Syria,*  
*May 15, 1925.*

J. W. Booth, the missionary with an eager and youthful spirit who wrote this article, died in Syria in 1928. The article is published with the kind permission of *The Improvement Era*, Salt Lake.

Oregonians who made this book: Stories, Alfred Powers; Headpieces, Elizabeth Patton; Cover Design, Frank G. Hutchinson; Text set in 14-pt. Caslon Old Face (*Linotype*), and printed by The Metropolitan Press; Binding by Ernst.

















